RICHARD PRYOR / THE STATE

The Comedy Issue!

TINA FEY / LIAM NEESONS

Entertainment Weekly

OCT. 3, 2014
#1331
NOOICE!

THE GUYS PICK **28** BITS, SKITS, SKETCHES & STARS **YOU MUST SEE!**

Guest Editors

Key & Peele

INSIDE THEIR CRAZY RISE FROM SINGING TELEGRAMS TO YOUTUBE STARS TO OBAMA'S LIVING ROOM

Plus: They write the Must List, Bullseye & more!

DISCOVER WHAT MAKES A HERO
THE FLASH
SERIES PREMIERE OCT 7 TUES 8/7c
THE CW TV NOW

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ON THE COVER

Keegan-Michael Key and Jordan Peele photographed exclusively for EW by Art Streiber on Aug. 18, 2014, in Los Angeles

STYLING: SEAN KNIGHT/JED ROOT; GROOMING: HELEN ROBERTSON/CELESTINE AGENCY; PROP STYLING: NICK TORTORICI; KEY'S AND PEELE'S T-SHIRTS: TOPMAN

LETTER FRO
THE GUEST
Dear Readers,
When we were asked to
ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY, we
just a little. Look, every
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Photographs by **ART STREIBER**

KEY & PEELE PRESENT THE COMEDY ISSUE

LETTER FROM THE GUEST EDITORS

Dear Readers,

When we were asked to guest-edit Entertainment Weekly, we peed a little. Just a little. Look, every time Keegan walks into an airport, he buys a magazine, and it's always an Entertainment Weekly. Always. Like every single time. And Jordan used to cut out little thumbnail pictures of different celebrities from EW and, with a glue stick and index cards, would make little playing cards for each one that he could trade or play with. So getting the chance to actually cut and paste in the magazine itself is a big deal to us. It was a real "delightful shock" for us. And then of course two seconds later we were like, "Oh, shoot, now we've gotta do this."

Assigning the stories in this issue was more difficult than we anticipated. Mainly because we had to hold back and not make every single piece about us and our accomplishments. But also because a lot of the people featured here are not just people whose work we like but also people we really know and admire. The issue feels very personal to us in that way. It was a bit like putting together one of our episodes—only there's a freedom in the guest-editing job that we don't have in our jobs because with our show, we have to worry about getting kicked off the air. But Entertainment Weekly is going to survive even if we totally mess up. Right?? Basically what we're saying is, if it's a good issue, we're proud of our work. But if it's not, that's not on us. Enjoy the issue, and if you want to write any letters of complaint to the editor, our address is 123 Main Street, Anywhere, USA.

Love,

TOP THE POPPERS

Key and Peele were squaring up at our Comic-Con craft-services table this July when I threw down the gauntlet. Or should I say, the hors d'oeuvre. "Tina Fey and Amy Poehler put jalapeño poppers on The Must List, guys, so I'm expecting big things out of this collaboration," I said. "Seriously, let 'er rip." I hope you agree: The duo delivered, and then some. And while Key and Peele's fingerprints may be all over this issue, **executive editor Meeta Agrawal** and **TV senior editor Adam Markovitz** deserve a round of applause, too; they brought the vision to life. Apps on me, guys. But only if you take me back next week...
—MATT BEAN,
Editor

Photograph by ART STREIBER

STYLING: SEAN KNIGHT/JED ROOT; GROOMING: HELEN ROBERTSON/CELESTINE AGENCY; PROP STYLING: NICK TORTORICI; JEANS, T-SHIRTS: TOPMAN; SWEATER: PALACE COSTUME VINTAGE

FEEDBACK

WRITE TO US! → EW_LETTERS@EW.COM

First Impressions: *Red Band Society*

Did the Fox pilot deliver or disappoint? Readers go with their gut.

> I liked the premise and I'm intrigued by a medical show told from the patient's POV, but I had trouble believing a lot of what went on in this episode. **QXPCH**

> I thoroughly enjoyed it. It had a fun, early-*Glee* atmosphere, but with the backdrop of the hospital. I am calling it *Glee's Anatomy*. **JUST HAVIN FUN.**

> This was just too silly. The dialogue made me laugh out loud a couple of times. And not because it was intentionally funny. **ML3515**

Entertainment
Simpsons + Family Guy

Entertainment
125 SHOWS
FALL TV PREVIEW

Battle of the Bulge

Regarding Homer and Peter's chicken fight in the ***Simpsons*/*Family Guy*** crossover (#1328): They have the same deficits (drinking, laziness, gluttony), but both have bad tempers and lack inhibitions, which will make them fearsome combatants. Peter has the edge in slugging toe-to-toe, but Homer has the edge when it comes to tricky maneuvers (as shown in his fight with George H.W. Bush in season 7).

CHARLES HOFFMAN
Los Angeles

Just the Facts

It was great to see "**Chart Attack**" in the magazine. Thanks for allowing readers to once again see what the masses are flocking to—it's such an important aspect of your publication.

ANDREW BILLINGS
Tuscaloosa, Ala.

Unfinished Business

Dan Stevens gave us three seasons on *Downton Abbey*, but one gets the impression he did so only because of his contract. It's a shame he didn't emulate George Clooney on *ER* a little more on that front (he wouldn't even do one more episode to tie up Matthew Crawley's story line?!).

YVONNE JOCKS
Euless, Tex.

Going Off the Grid

In your **Fall TV Preview** (#1329/1330), why did you replace the programming grids with "Your Perfect Night"? The old grids were a useful tool in planning a night of TV watching that was legitimately mine. Your perfect night includes conglomerations of the letters *N, C, I*, and *S* and Chuck Lorre's patented humorless hackery. No thanks.

MICHAEL RANDOIS
Via iPad

Geek Unchic

I was pleased to see ***The Flash*** in "Six Can't-Miss New TV Shows." Then you had to ruin it by saying that "television can let its geek flag fly." Six shows this season are based on comic books, and the year's two biggest films are superhero movies. You don't have this kind of success if only "geeks" enjoy the genre.

RUSS STEVENS
Dallas, N.C.

Please Don't Stop the Music

I loved **Season Kent**'s fall playlist (Music). I find many of my favorite songs from the shows I watch, and I always wonder about the people responsible for soundtracking epic scenes. After reading this, I downloaded several of the songs. Please give us more of these recommendations!

LEIGH MARDOVICH
Lloyd Harbor, N.Y.

The Queen of Comedy

I so enjoyed looking back on **Joan Rivers**' 10 most memorable projects (News and Notes). I'd add the 1978 film she directed, ***Rabbit Test***, starring Billy Crystal as the first pregnant man.

ANTHONY J. OGANS
Visalia, Calif.

CORRECTIONS

Them, *the combined, shorter cut of* The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby, *was first proposed by the filmmakers, not by distributor Harvey Weinstein (#1329/1330, Movies). The on-set photograph of the cast and director of* Ghostbusters II *was taken in 1989 (#1329/1330, Movies).*

CONTACT US We want to know what you think. Send emails to *ew_letters@ew.com* or mail to 135 W. 50th St., New York, NY 10020. Include your name, address, and telephone number. Letters may be edited for clarity or length.

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KEY: PHOTOGRAPH BY ART STREIBER; *RED BAND SOCIETY*: ANNETTE BROWN/FOX

The Week's Best
SOUND BI

"Why do you have so many secrets, Danny? You're an ob-gyn, you're not Batman!"

—Mindy (Mindy Kaling) on *The Mindy Project*

"What, are you gonna gamble on the unknown contents of a bulky sweater?"

—Schmidt (Max Greenfield), encouraging his pals to find a hookup at the last wedding of the summer, on *New Girl*

"I love that out of everyone at this table, [Daniel Boulud's] the one that brought up farts."

—Andy Samberg on *Top Chef Duels*

"You know your business model is in rough shape when you need to appoint your own in-house Special Victims Unit."

—Jon Stewart, on the NFL's new committee of four women who will help shape policy, on *The Daily Show*

"I can't ask her. It's sexual harassment.... Come on, Nora. You can bring up panties in a much more efficient and less offensive way than I can."

—Eli (Alan Cumming), trying to persuade a colleague to find out whether an intern is wearing underwear, on *The Good Wife*

"I said I was a virgin, not a monk."

—Jamie (Sam Heughan), explaining how he learned to kiss like that, on *Outlander*

"Yeah, that's a f---ing princess cut!"

—Wendy (Tina Fey), punching Wade (Dax Shepard) in the face, in *This Is Where I Leave You*

"I'm snowballin' here, sis. It's like that time you guys had that intervention for me right after semester at sea."

—Lindsay (Kether Donohue), bemoaning her promiscuous ways, on *You're the Worst*

SAMBERG: MARK DAVIS/GETTY IMAGES; KALING: EMILY SHUR/FOX; STEWART: FRANK OCKENFELS 3/COMEDY CENTRAL; GREENFIELD: GREG GAYNE/FOX; CUMMING: JOJO WHILDEN/CBS; HEUGHAN: FRANK W. OCKENFELS 3/STARZ; FEY: JESSICA MIGLIO; DONOHUE: BYRON COHEN/FX

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THE
Key &
PEELE

MUST LIST

Our guest editors weigh in on what they can't wait to see, hear, and read this year

KEY AND PEELE: PHOTOGRAPH BY ART STREIBER; *SONS OF ANARCHY*: PRASHANT GUPTA/FX (2); *THE BOXTROLLS*: LAIKA

1

JORDAN'S PICK

THE BOXTROLLS

Stop-motion animation turns us all into children in a way computers can't quite do. Though it wasn't directed by genius director Henry Selick, the team that made *Coraline* and *ParaNorman* is still always on point. *(Rated PG)*

KEEGAN'S PICK

SONS OF ANARCHY

I'm super looking forward to this series finale. The only inquisitive itch that really needs to be scratched for me: Is Gemma left standing? *(FX, Tuesdays, 10 p.m.)*

Illustration by **JESSE LENZ**

3

JORDAN'S PICK

A WALK AMONG THE TOMBSTONES

Liam Neesons. *(Rated R)*

4

KEEGAN'S PICK **THE CONGRESS** Half live action, half animated, it's a trippy treatise on where a person and her on-screen persona begin and end. Robin Wright is incredible. *(NR)*

5

JORDAN'S PICK

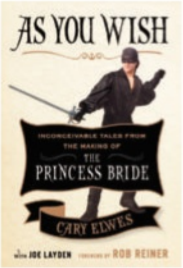
GOTHAM

Transcendent or a train wreck? It can't be anything in between. If it is as good as it should be, it'll be the best show of all time. *(Fox, Mondays, 8 p.m.)*

6

KEEGAN'S PICK **LEGENDS** This fun spy show gives me a chance every week to watch two things I love: Sean Bean and Sean Bean doing an array of accents. *(TNT, Wednesdays, 9 p.m.)*

7



JORDAN'S PICK

AS YOU WISH, by Cary Elwes

Not putting this behind-the-scenes look at *The Princess Bride* on the list would be inconceivable. I can't even watch Robin Wright on *House of Cards* without imagining she's Princess Buttercup. *(Out Oct. 14)*

8

JORDAN'S PICK

THE INTERVIEW

These guys are going to kill Kim Jong-un?!? This is such a dangerously ambitious project. Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg are the funniest filmmakers in the game right now. *(NR; out Dec. 25)*

MUST LIST APP! You can sample and download songs, buy movie tickets, see videos, and more with EW's Must List iPad and iPhone app, available at iTunes.

9

KEEGAN'S PICK

THE HONORABLE WOMAN

Maggie Gyllenhaal is mesmerizing in this political thriller about a Jewish family trying to make a difference in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The character of Nessa Stein is one of the most complex I've seen on TV in years. *(SundanceTV; available on demand)*

Robb Report

10

KEEGAN'S PICK **SURVIVOR'S REMORSE** We are about to find out what kind of multihyphenate LeBron James is. The NBA superstar exec-produced this comedy, which deals with the ups and downs of success in the world of pro basketball. *(Starz, Saturdays, 9 p.m., beginning Oct. 4)*

A WALK AMONG THE TOMBSTONES: ATSUSHI NISHIJIMA; *GOTHAM*: JESSICA MIGLIO/FOX; *LEGENDS*: DOUG HYUN/TNT; *THE INTERVIEW*: ED ARAQUEL; *THE HONORABLE WOMAN*: DES WILLIE/SUNDANCETV; *SURVIVOR'S REMORSE*: QUANTRELL D. COLBERT/STARZ

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NICOLAS CAGE FINDS GOD IN THE LEFT BEHIND *FRANCHISE, PAGE 22*

NEWS AND NOTES

Matthew Fox in *Lost*'s pilot

Lost and Found

On the 10th anniversary of its debut, **Doc Jensen** revisits the challenges of being *Lost*'s biggest champion

ON SEPT. 22, 2004, a wild pop romance—a torrid affair between audience and story—took off when 18.7 million viewers tuned in to ABC to watch Oceanic Flight 815 crash on a strange island and leave an eclectic cross section of archetypes on a vast spit of mystery. Here, on the 10th anniversary of *Lost*'s premiere, we remember a first date for the ages. Produced for $12 million and shot by director J.J. Abrams with Spielbergian verve, the pilot immediately sucked us into an exotic survival saga and shrewdly formulated allegory for a fractured, catastrophe-frazzled world. It captured your imagination by promising a journey with global vision, packed with endless adventure and electrifying discovery—and by making you wonder how long this no-escape ironic odyssey could last as the kind of perpetual storytelling machine American television requires. Perhaps part of our attraction to *Lost* was the implicit danger. We knew we had fallen for this sort of sexy crackerjack before. *Twin Peaks*. *The X-Files*. We knew it could burn us by turning incoherent over time or withholding answers it may never have had in the first

CAGE: NOAM GALAI/WIREIMAGE.COM; *LOST*: MARIO PEREZ/ABC/GETTY IMAGES

J.J. Abrams directs Dominic Monaghan and Evangeline Lilly in *Lost*'s first episode; (right) with the cast of *Lost*

MARIO PEREZ/ABC/GETTY IMAGES (2)

place. We jumped into it anyway, hoping for happily ever after.

Pop culture anniversaries can often be "Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative" occasions. *Lost* is a more complex remembrance. You can't recall how it hooked all of us without also recalling how it dissatisfied so many. Waxing nostalgic about that seductive, sublime first season—the simplicity of the macro narrative; the artful intricacy of the flashback storytelling structure; the poignancy of its gracious humanism; the adventure, the humor, all those glittering mysteries!—reminds those ultimately unfulfilled by *Lost* of their misplaced faith and of what the show had become by the sixth and final season. *Lost*'s treatment of its core themes of redemption, community, and survival started earthy and existential and finished esoteric and mystic. A show that originally seemed to embrace (and question) all worldviews appeared to pick favorites, choosing the "man of faith" over the "man of science."

In the aftermath, we are left with Losties who feel certain that they were loved, Losties who feel jilted, and an enduring conflict between the two parties that boils with the rancor of a bitter custody battle: How do we remember *Lost*? Was it a success or a failure? Who decides? Who gets to be the caretaker of its memory? If there is one thing I hate about *Lost*—and it is probably the only thing I, Doc Jensen, ardent, gonzo acolyte of *Lost*, truly hate about *Lost*—it is how its evolving vision (unintentionally) fractured its vibrant fan community, and how its well-meaning wont for never-ending friendly debate over the finale has resulted in never-ending unfriendly fighting over the show's merit and meaning.

What is certain is that *Lost* helped change the way we watch and talk about television. A once-passive experience processed the next day around the watercooler is now an interactive experience parsed immediately via social media, recaps, and blogs. Of course, *Lost* reminds us that this kind of cultural discourse can also be a messy, flawed affair. Case in point: me. I wrestle with the value of my contribution to the conversation. The overthinking. The projections. The emotional enmeshment. My constant theorizing—sometimes cheeky, more often sincere—cultivated the notion that *Lost* was a puzzle to be solved, not a story to be enjoyed. What I regret the most is season 6. Those frustrated by the show's oblique, confounding story needed clear-eyed, commonsense analysis, not one last hurrah of my absurd shtick. I am sorry.

MY CONSTANT THEORIZING CULTIVATED THE NOTION THAT *LOST* WAS A PUZZLE TO BE SOLVED, NOT A STORY TO BE ENJOYED.

The legacy of *Lost* is seen in shows that try to generate following and fervor not so much by replicating its strategies but by modulating them to minimize their risk. Few if any have produced *Lost*-level results.

Heroes—hatched as *Lost* was beginning to exasperate viewers—attracted eyeballs with high-speed plotting, then realized it wasn't sustainable, and flailed for better solutions. *Fringe* launched running scared of serialization and mythology; it stumbled. The precedent of *Lost* seeded or at least surely makes appealing binge media like Netflix and the anthology format represented by *True Detective* and *American Horror Story*—single-season blasts of weird fiction. Big-saga TV thrives in the form of *The Walking Dead* and *Game of Thrones*, whose viewers don't have the same "Do you have a master plan?" angst that *Lost* fans had: The series bibles are available at a bookstore near you. These are shows for a culture that frets over bold, demanding storytelling as much as it craves and celebrates it.

The 10-year anniversary of *Lost* recalls the extraordinary moment to which it belongs: the bloom of the

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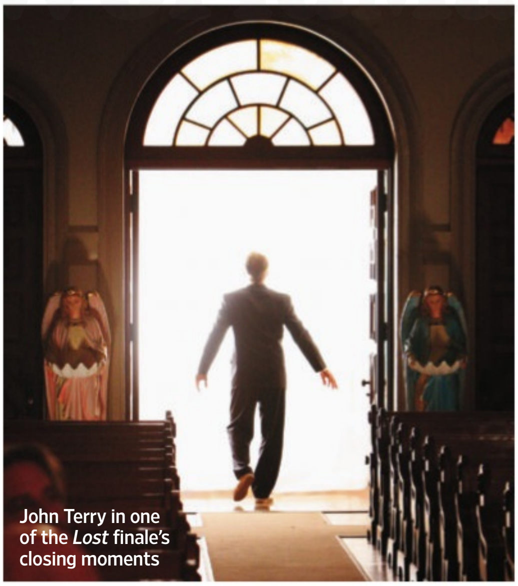

John Terry in one of the *Lost* finale's closing moments

so-called new golden age of television. *Lost* suffers in comparison with more realized statements like *The Sopranos*. But we must remind ourselves that TV, and broadcast TV in particular, is tougher soil than cinema for auteurism to flourish in. Not every show launches fully formed, and many find their identity on the fly. *Lost* was not born a passion project (ABC originated the concept; the pilot was developed and produced in less than six months), although it became one for showrunners Damon Lindelof and Carlton Cuse and their collaborators. (Full disclosure: Since *Lost*, Damon and I have developed a professional relationship. I worked with him as a writer and executive producer on the forthcoming Disney film *Tomorrowland*.) You can remember their effort as a swing for greatness that fell short, or you can remember their work as part of a movement that has stretched the medium and our expectations of it. I choose the latter.

I won't celebrate the *Lost* anniversary by rewatching it. TV shows belong to the time they were made. When they end, they should be left behind. I would rather use the time to gamble on a show written for today, about who we are now. *Lost* was the greatest love of my TV-watching life...so far. I wait for the next one. And I wait for a better one. Because of *Lost*, it's a happily-ever-after dream I expect to come true.

WHEN 140 CHARACTERS AREN'T ENOUGH

We gave *Scandal*'s Joshua Malina 140 words to tell us how he really felt about *The New York Times*' characterization of his show's creator, Shonda Rhimes. (Writer Alessandra Stanley has said she intended the article "to praise" Rhimes.)

Joshua Malina
@JoshMalina

Wow. Did I just read a @nytimes piece that reduced my brilliant, creative, compassionate, thoughtful, badass boss to an "angry black woman?"

IF YOU'RE AT ALL FAMILIAR with my Twitter feed, you know that I hate to post anything too positive, but I meant every word about Shonda, and I felt compelled to respond in some way to Alessandra Stanley's offensive and patronizing article. Stanley managed to misread completely both Shonda the woman and her work.

Rather than illuminating Shonda Rhimes, the piece casts a light on Alessandra Stanley, and it's not an especially flattering one. There's a saying about burying the lede. This is an instance where they should have buried the whole article—literally, in a hole. While I'm not shocked that there's a journalist out there who would write such things, it boggles the mind to contemplate how many others must have signed off on this piece before it was deemed fit to print. Badly done, *New York Times*.

LOST: MARIO PEREZ/ABC/GETTY IMAGES

First LOOK

PHILOSOPHY 404

TV

Christopher Walken Gets Hooked in *Peter Pan Live!*

On Dec. 4, Christopher Walken will perform several songs as Captain Hook in NBC's *Peter Pan Live!*, the network's follow-up to last year's *Sound of Music* spectacular, which attracted more than 18 million viewers. The *True Romance* star is famous for playing bad guys—but not exactly singing-and-dancing ones. Can he carry a tune? "I'm not a good singer," the 13-time Broadway veteran (*A Behanding in Spokane*) admits. "The songs are done almost like patter. Think Rex Harrison in *My Fair Lady*." *Girls'* Allison Williams will portray Peter Pan, and Walken says he was impressed by her performance at a recent table read. "Oh, she's wonderful," he says. "I suspect she really can sing." Let's hope! —*Clark Collis*

BACK TO SCHOOL

EW endorses any curriculum that requires *Judge Judy* bingeing, so as your college adviser, we suggest you enroll in all of these real courses this fall. —*Kat Ward*

RHETORIC 24

Arguing With Judge Judy: Popular "Logic" on TV Judge Shows

University of California at Berkeley

Course Description "Identifying popular logical fallacies on *Judge Judy* and *The People's Court* and discussing why such strategies are so widespread. Students who are interested in logic, argument, TV, and American popular culture will probably be interested in this course."

ENGLISH 1102UV

Good Kids, Mad Cities

Georgia Regents University

Course Description "This course will examine the role of urban living on the development of young people. By studying and analyzing various literature, films, and [Kendrick Lamar's *good kid, m.A.A.d city*] album, we will consider what effects our characters' surroundings have on who they become as adults."

AMERICAN STUDIES 320 003

***The Hunger Games*: Class, Politics and Marketing**

American University

Course Description "Using [Suzanne Collins' *Hunger Games*] series as a case study, this course examines the interplay of class, politics, ethics, and marketing. Topics covered include oppression, feminism, food deserts, rebellion, the publishing industry, and social media marketing."

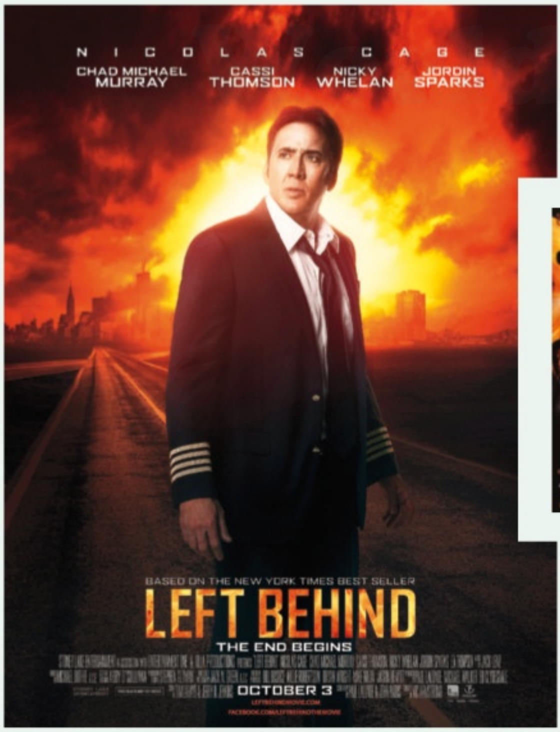
HONORS SEMINAR 348F

Deconstructing *Breaking Bad*

University of Maryland

Course Description "What can various critical lenses such as gender, race, national identity, sexuality, class, and disability do to unpack this complex and multifaceted series? What does the series have to say about contemporary masculinity?... How do contemporary modes of spectatorship, such as repeat or 'binge viewing,' affect the manner in which the show is constructed, styled, and disseminated?"

PETER PAN LIVE!: NINO MUNOZ/NBC; WALKEN: RICHIE BUXO/SPLASH NEWS/CORBIS; JUDGE JUDY: VALERIE MACON/GETTY IMAGES; KENDRICK LAMAR: LESTER COHEN/WIREIMAGE.COM; *THE HUNGER GAMES*: MURRAY CLOSE; *BREAKING BAD*: FRANK OCKENFELS 3/AMC



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THE MOVIE

2014's *Left Behind*; (inset) 2000's *Left Behind*

Movies

Nicolas Cage Has A "Come to Jesus" Moment

The unpredictable star makes his first foray into faith-based films with a reboot of Kirk Cameron's *Left Behind*. **BY CHRIS LEE**

NOBODY PLAYS HELL-BENT LIKE NICOLAS CAGE—as in, physically and behaviorally *bent by hell*. In 2011's *Drive Angry*, he's an undead criminal who breaks out of the fiery hereafter with murder on his mind, while in *Ghost Rider* (and its critically savaged sequel), Cage portrays a biker hellion whose skull bursts into flames after he gives up his soul to Satan. All of which makes the Oscar winner's star turn in Oct. 3's faith-based thriller *Left Behind* a bit perplexing. The $16 million movie reboot of a 2000 straight-to-video release starring Kirk Cameron (he of *Growing Pains* fame) features Cage as an airline pilot struggling to maintain control of his jet when the Rapture hits. His character is a man of little faith, but after realizing that true believers and innocent children have been plucked from Earth by God, he comes to see the light.

There's a lot of that going around. Already, 2014 has been dubbed "the year of the biblical movie," with heavyweight actors including Russell Crowe (*Noah*) and Christian Bale (*Exodus: Gods and Kings*) lining up big parts in Old Testament-inspired films. *Left Behind*, however, finds Cage in the humbler company of Kevin Sorbo and Greg Kinnear, the respective stars of *God's Not Dead* and *Heaven Is for Real*. Those contemporary evangelical films may not get the attention of critics or the Academy, but they have surpassed all box office expectations by connecting with a core churchgoing audience. Question is, has Cage—the faded A-lister responsible for borderline-bonkers performances in *Vampire's Kiss* and *Deadfall*—been cinematically born again?

"I've always been attracted to movies not afraid to face extraordinary circumstances," Cage said during a recent teleconference for *Left Behind*, adding: "My brother Marc is a Christian pastor. He said, 'Nicky, you've really got to do this.' When I saw how passionate he is, I wanted to do the film for my brother, too."

The movie certainly represents a second coming for its writer-producer, Paul Lalonde. He adapted 2000's *Left Behind* from a best-selling series of apocalyptic novels by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins. And that film ended up spawning a DVD trilogy that has sold more than 11 million copies combined—a watershed for faith-based cinema.

But when Lalonde decided to revisit the franchise, streamlining the original film's action and toning down the dogma in a bid for crossover appeal—"trying to reach beyond the choir," as he puts it—the movie mogul knew he needed a bankable star like Cage, even if the actor's image hasn't exactly been angelic (save his character in 1998's *City of Angels*). "If I need a heart transplant, I would like the best surgeon I can get, not the best *Christian* surgeon," Lalonde says. "Nobody had to undergo a piety test to work in this movie."

Fair enough, but will evangelical audiences flood the box office for a fellow they don't view as one of their own? Phil Cooke, a television and movie producer/Christian-media consultant who holds a Ph.D. in theology, believes casting Cage could backfire. "I think the greater Christian community will be deeply skeptical," Cooke says. "He's known for *Drive Angry*. That is not the character you want to think about when you think about *Left Behind*."

Moreover, Cooke feels the movie's narrative similarities to the HBO series *The Leftovers* (which unfolds after 2 percent of the world's population mysteriously vanishes) could result in "Rapture fatigue." Or worse, that the shoddy production values and preachy tone of the earlier *Left Behind* could compromise the new version's commercial prospects.

WILL EVANGELICAL AUDIENCES FLOOD THE BOX OFFICE FOR A FELLOW THEY DON'T VIEW AS ONE OF THEIR OWN?

All that skepticism is just silly, though, says Mark Borde, co-president of the movie's distributor, Freestyle Releasing. "Audiences trust movies with movie stars," he says. "Take a movie with this kind of track record and pre-awareness and say, 'This time it stars Nic Cage.' Their ears perk up."

Cage, meanwhile, is content to leave behind any discussion of his religious choices. "If you look at my filmography, my work follows spiritual themes," the actor said. "But my spirituality is not for the media. Movies allow me to explore the inner world."

LEFT BEHIND (2000): COLUMBIA TRISTAR/EVERETT COLLECTION

"compelling"
– CHICAGO SUN-TIMES
"the best new drama this fall"
– EONLINE.COM
"...a must-see..."
– MERCURYNEWS.COM
"haunting"
– TVLINE.COM
"chilling"
– IN STYLE
"phenomenal"
"intense"
"spectacular"
– SPOILERTV.COM
"...a powerfully emotional mystery..."
– TV GUIDE
Who Killed Danny?
#SuspectEveryone
CRIME SCENE DO NOT CROSS
A 10-Part Mystery Event
GRACEPOINT
THURSDAYS
OCT 2
FOX

The Comedy ISSUE

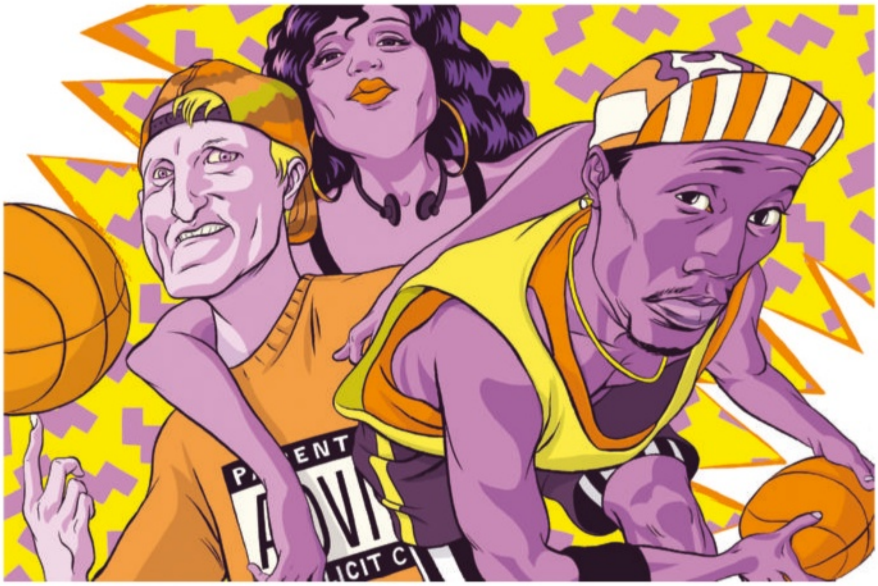
DALTON ROSS
→ **EDITOR AT LARGE**

THE BUDDY SYSTEM

What makes a great buddy comedy? That's the question guest editors Key and Peele asked (ahem, *assigned*) Dalton Ross for this week's column, and it turns out the answer is a little friendship, some teamwork—and a whole lot of neck-wringing rivalry.

SO IT SEEMS THAT Key and/or Peele wanted me to write a column for the issue they are guest-editing, and he/they thought it would be cool for me to write about buddy comedies. First off, I liked Key and Peele a lot more before they started giving me work to do, so thanks for that, guys. But I do have to admit, the buddy-comedy concept makes sense, especially seeing as how our two guest editors either are great buddies or do an awesome job of pretending to like each other on screen before retreating into their offscreen cocoons of petty resentment and jealousy. (*"Why does Key get his name first in the title?" "How come Peele got to say 'Liam Neesons' one more time than I did?"*)

Or does the fact that Key and Peele do such a good job of at least maintaining the public facade of friendship mean that they don't even qualify as buddy comedians? Because many of the best buddy comedies are about people who are not buddies at all, but rather polar opposites brought together through fate, luck, chance...or a series of wild, Hollywood-manufactured high jinks. You think Larry was psyched to have his goofy cousin Balki cramping his (granted, terrible) style on *Perfect Strangers*? Robert De Niro looked like he wanted to knock Charles Grodin senseless through about 98 percent of *Midnight Run*. And those weren't two pillows John Candy stuck his hand between in *Planes, Trains & Automobiles*. It's that tension that helps make the humor work. Here are a few of my other favorite *I-kinda-want-to-wring-your-neck* buddy-comedy adventures.



→ 48 HRS.

"We ain't partners, we ain't brothers, and we ain't friends." I don't have the hard data to back this up, but I am confident that some variation on that quote has been said in pretty much every single buddy comedy ever. But it was said first and best by Nick Nolte to Eddie Murphy, with the duo making the most incredible odd couple since...well, *The Odd Couple.*

→ WHITE MEN CAN'T JUMP

Can I just say that Wesley Snipes' wardrobe is *super* distracting in this film? On more than one occasion the dude wears two tank tops at the same time that are each cut almost down to his belly button, and for the life of me I cannot grasp what he is trying to accomplish with that. Also, Woody Harrelson spends an inordinate amount of time in a tie-dyed baseball hat, so, you know, curious wardrobe choices all around. Funny movie, though.

→ RUSHMORE

One's a teenager, and the other is Bill Murray, but make no mistake: *Rushmore* is ultimately a buddy comedy about a weird bond between two eccentrics who fall for the same woman. The revenge montage between Max and Mr. Blume set to the Who's "A Quick One While He's Away" is pure perfection.

→ OUTRAGEOUS FORTUNE

This cheesetastic '80s romp begins with Shelley Long and Bette Midler choking each other in a morgue and ends with Long defeating the bad guy...through the power of dance! ("Nine years of ballet, a--hole!" Best line ever?) Bonus points for the fact that the initial onscreen animosity extended off screen as well, with Midler later describing her stint working alongside Long as "pretty rough." Midler and Long going Method? Now, *that's* commitment!

ROSS: PATRICK JAMES MILLER; KEY AND PEELE: PHOTOGRAPH BY ART STREIBER

Illustration by CUN SHI

YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD STANDUP DOWN.
MULANEY
SUNDAY FUNDAY
OCT 5 FOX

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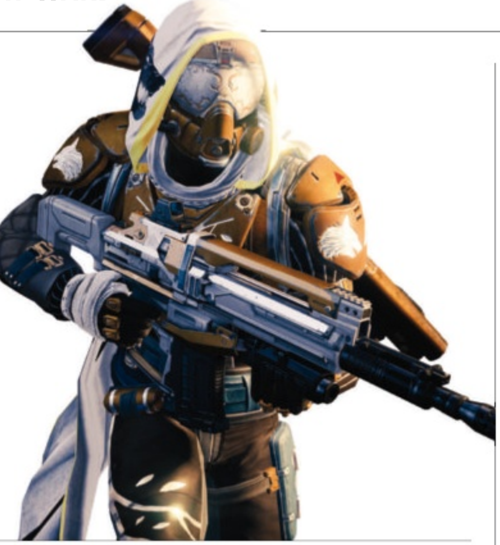
Chart Attack

Destiny kills and the National Football League dominates the field.

BY KAT WARD



$325M

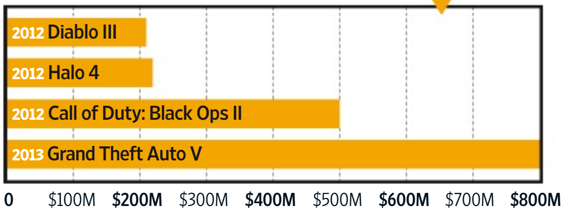
ESTIMATED WORLDWIDE SALES OF *DESTINY* IN ITS FIRST FIVE DAYS

▸ TOP VIDEOGAMES
WEEK ENDING SEPT. 13*

1. **Destiny**
2. **Madden NFL 15**
3. **NHL 15**
4. **The Sims 4**
5. **Minecraft**
6. **Call of Duty: Ghosts**
7. **Grand Theft Auto V**
8. **Mario Kart 8**
9. **Diablo III**
10. **Tomodachi Life**
11. **Pokémon X/Y**
12. **The Last of Us Remastered**
13. **Watch Dogs**
14. **Titanfall**
15. **Forza Motorsport 5**

SOURCE: VGCHARTZ; *ACROSS ALL PLATFORMS

▲ *While early reports that Destiny cleared $500 million in first-day sales now appear to be inflated, it's still comfortably in blockbuster territory. Below are first-day sales for some of its super-selling peers.*



▸ TOP HARDCOVER FICTION
WEEK ENDING SEPT. 14

1. **The Bone Clocks** DAVID MITCHELL
2. **Personal** LEE CHILD
3. **Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage** HARUKI MURAKAMI
4. **The Children Act** IAN McEWAN
5. **The Secret Place** TANA FRENCH
6. **All the Light We Cannot See** ANTHONY DOERR
7. **The Goldfinch** DONNA TARTT
8. **Adultery** PAULO COELHO
9. **The Long Way Home** LOUISE PENNY
10. **Somewhere Safe With Somebody Good** JAN KARON

SOURCE: AMERICAN BOOKSELLERS ASSOCIATION; RANKINGS ACCORDING TO THE INDIE BESTSELLER LIST, BASED ON SALES IN INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORES NATIONWIDE

▸ TOP HARDCOVER NONFICTION
WEEK ENDING SEPT. 14

1. **What If?** RANDALL MUNROE
2. **What I Know for Sure** OPRAH WINFREY
3. **Everything I Need to Know I Learned From a Little Golden Book** DIANE MULDROW
4. **13 Hours: The Inside Account of What Really Happened in Benghazi** MITCHELL ZUCKOFF
5. **World Order** HENRY KISSINGER
6. **In the Kingdom of Ice** HAMPTON SIDES
7. **The Organized Mind** DANIEL J. LEVITIN
8. **David and Goliath** MALCOLM GLADWELL
9. **Think Like a Freak** STEVEN D. LEVITT, STEPHEN J. DUBNER
10. **Act Like a Success, Think Like a Success** STEVE HARVEY

SOURCE: AMERICAN BOOKSELLERS ASSOCIATION; RANKINGS ACCORDING TO THE INDIE BESTSELLER LIST, BASED ON SALES IN INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORES NATIONWIDE

▸ TOP BROADCAST-TV SHOWS
WEEK ENDING SEPT. 14

1. **Sunday Night Football** NBC
2. **Thursday Night Football** CBS
3. **America's Got Talent** NBC
4. **Big Brother** CBS
5. **The Miss America Competition** ABC
6. **Under the Dome** CBS
7. **Unforgettable** CBS
8. **Dateline** NBC
9. **MasterChef** FOX
10. **The Biggest Loser** NBC

SOURCE: NIELSEN

▲ *7 million people watched Miss New York get her crown.*

▸ TOP MOVIES
SEPT. 19–21

1. **The Maze Runner** $32.5*
2. **A Walk Among the Tombstones** $12.8
3. **This Is Where I Leave You** $11.6
4. **No Good Deed** $9.8
5. **Dolphin Tale 2** $8.9
6. **Guardians of the Galaxy** $5.2
7. **Let's Be Cops** $2.7
8. **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles** $2.7
9. **The Drop** $2.1
10. **If I Stay** $1.8

SOURCE: BOX OFFICE MOJO; *DOMESTIC GROSS IN MILLIONS

▲ *The Maze Runner earned back nearly all of its $34 mil budget in its opening weekend.*

▸ TOP ALBUMS
WEEK ENDING SEPT. 15

1. **Four (Deluxe Version)** ONE DIRECTION
2. **Souled Out** JHENÉ AIKO
3. **Anomaly** LECRAE
4. **V** MAROON 5
5. **Title** (EP) MEGHAN TRAINOR
6. **Guardians of the Galaxy: Awesome Mix Vol. 1** VARIOUS ARTISTS
7. **Ryan Adams** RYAN ADAMS
8. **Old Boots, New Dirt** JASON ALDEAN
9. **Where It's At** DUSTIN LYNCH
10. **The New Classic** IGGY AZALEA

SOURCE: ITUNES

▲ *Viral-video star Trainor's debut EP sold 21,000 copies in its first week.*

▸ TOP SONGS
WEEK ENDING SEPT. 15

1. **All About That Bass** MEGHAN TRAINOR
2. **Shake It Off** TAYLOR SWIFT
3. **Bang Bang** JESSIE J, ARIANA GRANDE, NICKI MINAJ
4. **Centuries** FALL OUT BOY
5. **Anaconda** NICKI MINAJ
6. **Black Widow** IGGY AZALEA
7. **Maps** MAROON 5
8. **Rather Be** CLEAN BANDIT
9. **Burnin' It Down** JASON ALDEAN
10. **Break Free** ARIANA GRANDE

SOURCE: ITUNES

THE MAZE RUNNER: BEN ROTHSTEIN; TRAINOR: ANDREW TOTH/GETTY IMAGES; MISS NEW YORK: ADMEDIA/SPLASH NEWS

PRO MONEY. PRO PROBLEMS.
SURVIVOR'S
REMORSE
SERIES PREMIERE
OCT 4 SAT 9P
starz
OR ANYTIME ON
starz PLAY

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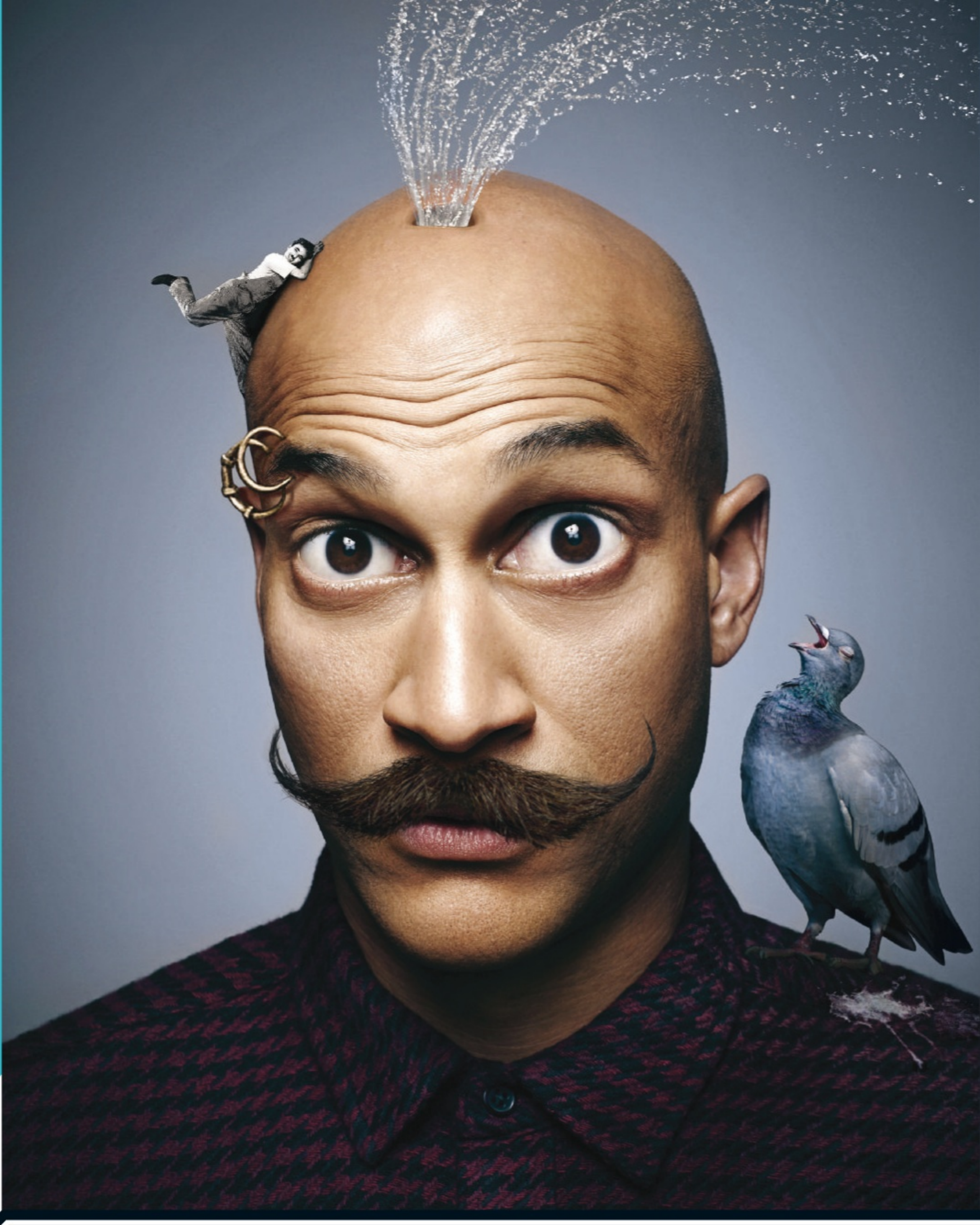
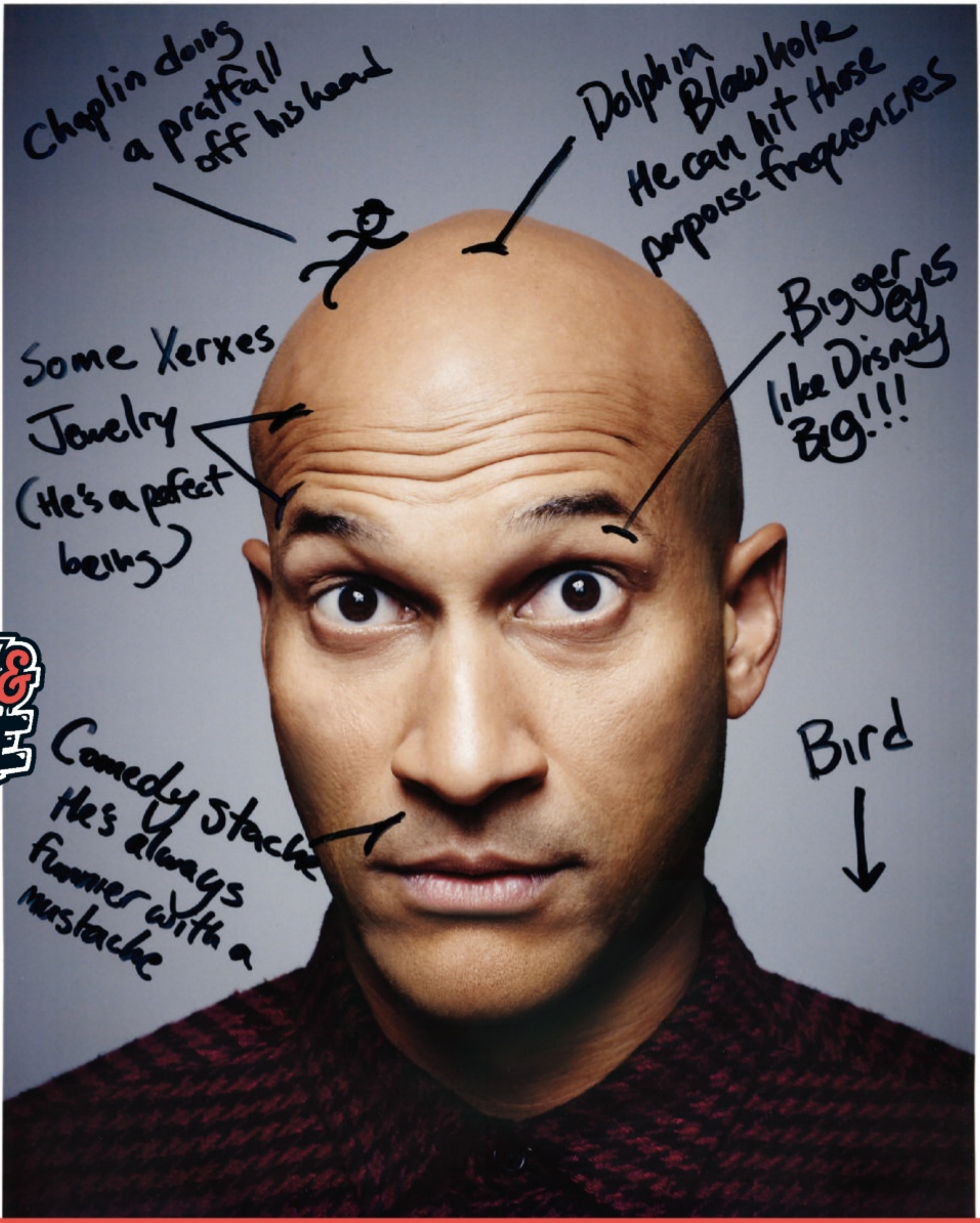


This Is What Happens When

The Comedy Issue

Key & Peele Run a Magazine

LOGOS BY 123KLAN


Chaplin doing a pratfall off his head
Dolphin Blowhole He can hit those purpose frequencies
Some Xerxes Jewelry (He's a perfect being)
Bigger eyes like Disney Big!!!
Comedy stache He's always funnier with a mustache
Bird

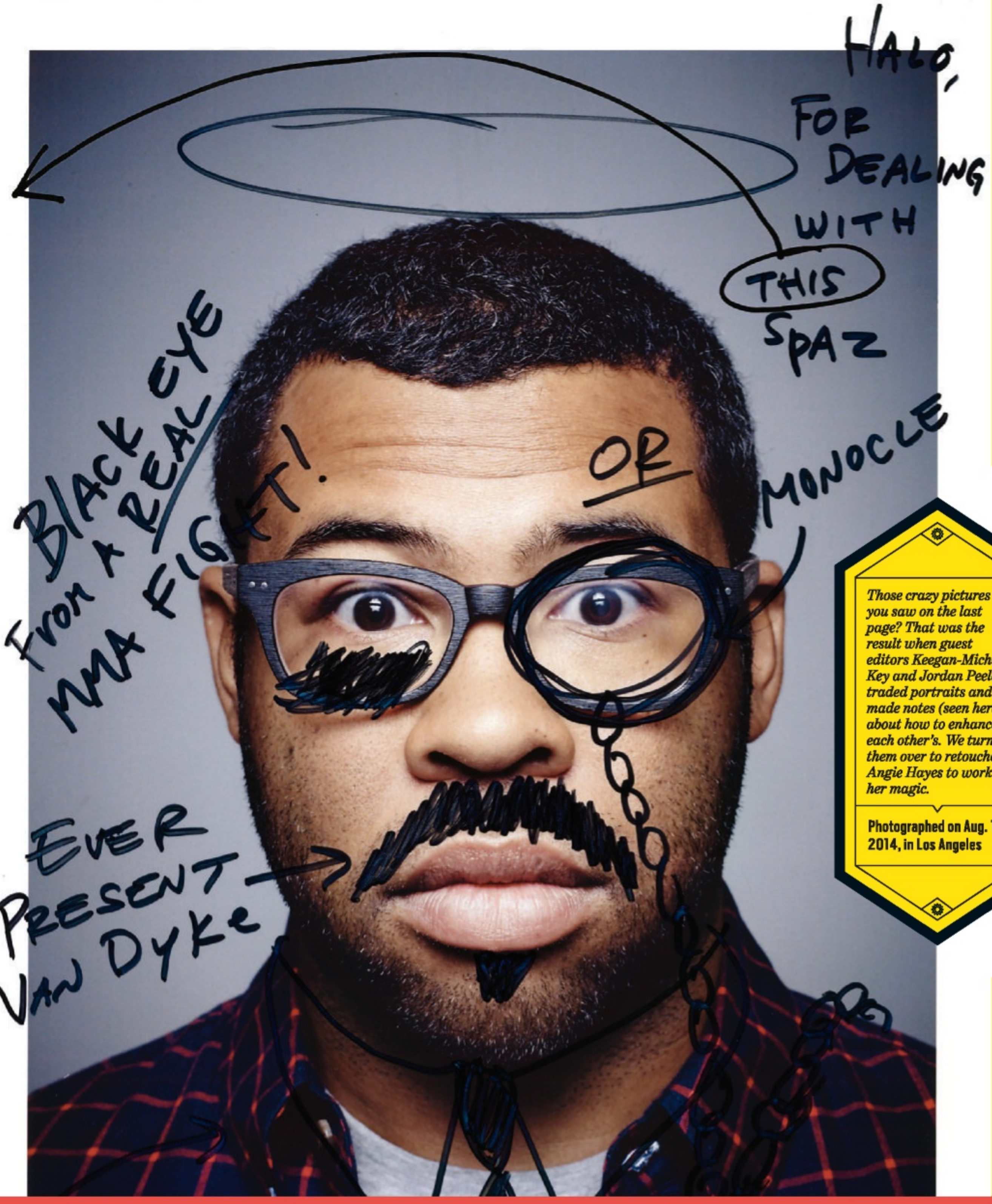
Key & Peele

The comedy titans took over this issue, filling it with the funniest comedians, shows, and projects out there. But first, here's a story about a fascinating subject they were too humble to assign us: themselves.

BY **RAY RAHMAN** ◆ PHOTOGRAPHS BY **ART STREIBER**

JORDAN PEELE IS LISTENING to Keegan-Michael Key tell a story. This happens a lot, partly because the two spend so much time together, but also because Key talks a lot. Peele doesn't, so during a break on the L.A. set of their Comedy Central show, he sinks into the couch as Key holds forth about football.

"I wanted to play as a kid," Key says, "but I couldn't because I had epilepsy." He did, however, join a flag-football team with friends a while back. It started out fun, he says, until things got


HALO,
FOR DEALING WITH THIS SPAZ
BLACK EYE FROM A REAL MMA FIGHT!
OR
MONOCLE
EVER PRESENT VAN DYKE

Those crazy pictures you saw on the last page? That was the result when guest editors Keegan-Michael Key and Jordan Peele traded portraits and made notes (seen here) about how to enhance each other's. We turned them over to retoucher Angie Hayes to work her magic.

Photographed on Aug. 18, 2014, in Los Angeles

out of hand. "Everyone was getting supercompetitive. Teams had their own scouts! No joke! Dudes would show up with former professional players." Key, 43, is on his feet now, acting out the scene: making faces, doing voices, and generally entertaining the small crowd gathered around.

Peele, 35, dressed in a President Obama costume for a sketch, is mostly silent. Then, in a soft voice better suited for a Michelin-starred restaurant than a soundstage, he says two words: "Movie idea." He goes on to deliver a well-crafted pitch about two past-their-prime fantasy-football fans who join an intramural league but quickly realize they suck, leading to a scheme to sabotage the other teams by drafting all the best players first—and then benching them. "The title can be *It's Not Fair!*" he concludes, only half joking. Key can barely (or, more likely, doesn't care to) contain his excitement. He starts riffing with Peele, giddily adding new twists and gags, and soon the duo are stepping over each other with ideas. They're still brainstorming when the producers call them back to set.

Key and Peele are a two-man factory, churning out little idea-widgets like this around the clock. Some of them become movie pitches. Some of them stay inside jokes. And a lot of them end up as sketches on their Comedy Central show, *Key & Peele*, which just began its fourth season. A breakout hit for the network, the series talks about race, class, society, and even football in a bold, brain-provoking way. That may sound heavy, but the humor is spry and prone to zigzags, informed and shaped by the minds of two pop-culture-steeped comedy nerds. The approach has earned *Key & Peele* plenty of high-profile fans: President Obama is a noted partisan, so much so that he has invited the guys over to the White House for a hang. Judd Apatow, who's producing a movie with the pair, called their work "the best of the human race" in TIME in April. At the Primetime Emmys last month, "Chiwetel Ejiofor told me that on the set of *12 Years a Slave*, he and Steve McQueen watched the 'Auction Block' sketch," Peele says. Peter Dinklage, Viola Davis, and Angela Bassett also greeted them warmly at the awards show, he notes. "Everybody had some *Key & Peele* sketch they wanted to talk about."

* * *

CHANCES ARE YOU'VE already talked about a *Key & Peele* sketch too. The show has been producing viral hits since it debuted in January 2012. The duo's most famous videos feature Peele (the shorter one) as Obama and Key (the balder one) as POTUS' bombastic "anger translator," Luther. (Obama, after reelection: "All your votes were crucial in this victory." Luther: "White people who voted for me, y'all are all now honorary black people!") Another fan favorite is "Substitute Teacher," which stars Key as a teacher from the inner city who has trouble pronouncing the names of his new class of suburban kids. Jacqueline turns into Jaykwellan, Blake into Belakay. Key says he gets called out for this one the most: "As I'm walking down the street, people will yell, 'Hey, Ay-Ayron!'"

Key and Peele are both biracial, and they're fascinated by America's endless weirdness about race, particularly as it relates to identity confusion. "Them both being biracial is really the ultimate ace in the hole," says Jay Martell, an executive producer on the show. "They can do things that very few other comedians of their talent can do and get away with it because of that." Key and Peele don't bother limiting themselves to black, white, and black-and-white characters, either: They'll play Asian-Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans with equal aplomb. The goal is never to mock anyone, though; Key and Peele want to expose truths, or at least play with them. "Racism's *roots* are in this country," says Peele. "When it comes to the idea of race and how it affects the world in a big way, we really focus a lot of our opinions in our sketches."

> "If you can get something to be so stupid that it's not even smart, it's the smartest kind of comedy."
>
> *—JORDAN PEELE*

Then again, a lot of their work has nothing to do with race. The show excels at genre parodies—high-production, director-driven scenes that spoof, say, the ubiquity of car explosions in '80s action movies. There are also genuine oddballs, such as the sketch where a man orders a meal from a rat that he thinks is "a Ratatouille," like Pixar's rodent chef. The twist: It's actually just a rat. The second twist: It can prepare sandwiches. The third twist: The sandwiches are terrible. It's strange, surreal, and superb all at once, and that's on top of the fact that the rat lives in a Ghostbusters trap. "My gold standard is something that is so unbelievably dumb—but you're laughing," says Peele. "If you can get something to be so stupid that it's not even smart, it's the smartest kind of comedy."

* * *

IF THINGS HAD gone as planned, Peele would be a puppeteer—that was his declared major at Sarah Lawrence College. It wasn't a completely random choice. As a quiet child growing up on Manhattan's

STYLING: SEAN KNIGHT/JED ROOT; GROOMING: HELEN ROBERTSON/CELESTINE AGENCY; PROP STYLING: NICK TORTORICI; (OPENING SPREAD) KEY'S SHIRT: TOPMAN; PEELE'S SHIRT: BAND OF OUTSIDERS; RETOUCHING: ANGIE HAYES/THE HAPPY PIXEL PROJECT

Upper West Side, he liked to draw. His first dream was to be an architect (a puppet master, really); by high school, he wanted to be a director (ditto). He had dabbled in performing at New York's TADA! Youth Theater, as well as in school plays, but the reserved Peele didn't feel a gravitational pull toward the stage.

His Sarah Lawrence classmate Rebecca Drysdale did. She was embedded in the campus improv scene, and after a few performances with her group Judith (as in Light), Peele was a convert. "I realized that with sketch and improv, I'm better than any puppet I've been making all semester," he says. He was still in school when Drysdale moved to Chicago, but when Peele visited and saw a few Second City shows, it was settled. "That was the moment," he says. "That trip to Chicago changed everything." Once he moved there, the pair started their own show called Two White Guys.

In 2000, Peele joined Boom Chicago in Amsterdam, where he and Drysdale worked with Jason Sudeikis, Ike Barinholtz, and Seth Meyers, who directed the first show Peele did there. "I saw him improvise a lot, and he was really funny, but I was really taken aback by what a great sketch writer he is," Meyers says. "He has inspiration and [an understanding of] structure. Not a lot of people have both." A comedy orbit seemed to be coming together around Peele. But there was another element somewhere out there—in Michigan of all places.

"I was just 100 percent convinced I couldn't do comedy for a living," says Key, who grew up in Detroit. "My parents were social workers, and all of my parents' friends were social workers. What the hell did we know?"

A few things, actually: Even as a kid, Key was keenly aware of the impact that TV comedy could have. "What gave me joy in my life was watching my father double over laughing at anything Bill Cosby did," he says. "My dad was a very stoic, kind of laconic guy. And so when he would laugh, I saw there was a power that came out of the TV that affected him." By high school, Key was a full-fledged drama kid who played Jesus in *Godspell* and idolized Robert De Niro. "I was like, 'If I could be that guy, or if I could do something like that guy, I think I'd be the happiest person in the world.' "

But De Niro was a New Yorker, and Key, feeling unready and insecure, decided to stay local for college. While at the University of Detroit, he was able to find one outlet for his craft: singing telegrams. "Once I had to play a grim reaper," he recounts. "There was a grim-reaper costume that you'd do for people's 40th birthdays." His next job was planting flowers at a graveyard. After a couple of years, still unwilling to face the stage—and specifically Second City, which had recently expanded to Detroit—he enrolled at Penn State. His reasoning: "If I audition for this theater and I don't get in, I don't know what I'm going to do. So I ran to graduate school to avoid making that decision."

With multiple theater degrees under his belt, Key came back to Detroit. He worked up the courage to join Second City and eventually moved on to e.t.c. in Chicago, where Drysdale was a castmate. She was the person who introduced Key and Peele to each other. "For a long time, they didn't know who the other was," Drysdale says, "which was very annoying to me." But she finally had the opportunity to change that when, in 2001, Peele's group went to Chicago to do a show. Key remembers it well: "She said, 'Wait till they get here. You're gonna love this Jordan guy. You're gonna love him.' And she did not sell me a bill of goods. Everything was as advertised."

The pair soon met again when

Who are the two characters Key and Peele have never played on their show before? Each other. Watch their impersonations at *ew.com/keypeele*.

KEY'S SHIRT, JEANS: RAG & BONE; T-SHIRT: TOPMAN; PEELE'S SHIRT, PANTS: TOPMAN

they auditioned for *MADtv*. They both got the gig, and moved to L.A. "That was serendipity," Key says. "We didn't expect that to happen, it just worked out that way. It's like part of the fairy tale." In fact, they hit it off so well that they decided to be roommates. Or at least that's how Key tells it—Peele recalls it differently. "He always says we lived together, but I remember it as maybe he was sleeping on my couch for a month," he says with a laugh. They spent a lot of that time playing *Halo* and analyzing shows like *Martin*. Key eventually got his own place, but they continued to build their relationship—just on screen. "We had a special pop on *MADtv*," Peele says. The series helped introduce them to a national audience and their sensibility to the industry, he says. "Everyone knew that we were up to something that was unique to us."

Peele left a little before the show's run concluded in 2009, while Key stuck around to the end. A couple of years went by. Their careers started to stall; they were each getting too many offers to play the Black Best Friend. They happened to share a manager, Joel Zadak, who noticed that two of his clients were repeatedly going out for similar projects, with little success. "He asked us, 'Do you guys want to develop something together? Force multiplier?' " Peele recalls. "Once the suggestion was made," says Key, "it's like, well, what are you gonna do?"

The idea worked, and both Fox and Comedy Central extended development deals to the duo. After picking the cable network, Key and Peele set out to collect a team of writers and producers they felt comfortable with, old friends like Drysdale and Colton Dunn. To help produce, they brought in Martell and Upright Citizens Brigade cofounder Ian Roberts. But it was their decision to take a chance on a new director, 31-year-old Peter Atencio, whose experience mostly consisted of Adult Swim-style shorts, that would prove pivotal. Atencio has directed every episode since the pilot, and his eye lends the series a cinematic feel rarely seen on a sketch comedy.

The show's wide range also gives Key and Peele the opportunity to merge their different energies—physical versus cerebral—in unexpected ways. "Keegan will surprise me with what he's capable of physically," Roberts says. "I remember a scene where he had to jump through a window. And he actually just dove—I would have to think that through for weeks before I knew I could get through and not hit my knees." Peele, on the other hand, is much more subdued. "While I'm expending a lot of energy, he's expending the same amount of energy right between here and here," Key says, gesturing toward his temples. "He's always playing chess, and I'm always playing a really, really vigorous game of checkers."

"I'm the, um...the Juno of the *Inception*," Peele says, referring to Ellen Page's character in the 2010 movie. He's laughing but not totally kidding. Peele estimates that he writes—as in actual fingers on a keyboard—30 to 50 percent of the sketches. "Jordan will lock himself in our office and knock out two scenes," says Key, who then builds on those ideas. He and the producers act as the "clearinghouse," he says. "But the writers do so much of the work," he adds. "I think people are under the impression that Jordan and I do all of this by ourselves."

Drysdale doesn't mind. "It's such a joy and pleasure to write when you know that anything you put on paper, they can pull off," she says. "Keegan is so talented physically. And Jordan is great at grabbing these really

(THIS PAGE AND NEXT) KEY'S AND PEELE'S JEANS, T-SHIRTS: TOPMAN; KEY'S BOOTS: FRYE BOOTS; PEELE'S BOOTS: H&M

specific black dudes." She laughs: "I don't know if he's ever met another black dude. Except for Keegan, who barely counts."

* * *

TODAY *KEY & PEELE* is just one component of the larger Key and Peele enterprise, and an increasingly small one at that. This past spring the pair made an unexpected foray into drama playing FBI agents on the FX hit *Fargo*—a job so dissimilar from sketch comedy they worried audiences would balk. "Our biggest concern was just not screwing up *Fargo*," says Peele. "We didn't want somebody who was familiar with us doing 'Liam Neesons' "—a recurring sketch in which they play valets obsessed with Neeson's movies—"to bring [our TV personas] into the *Fargo* experience." Key saw the role as a way to put his degrees to use. "It's like, 'I can use all that training that I spent all that time doing. All that college tuition.' "

Key and Peele are currently brainstorming concepts for a movie with Judd Apatow ("There was an idea, but we're not doing that anymore—we're going to come up with a new idea," says Key) and producing a reboot of the *Police Academy* franchise to be written by Barinholtz and Dave Stassen (both of *The Mindy Project*). "We don't know whether or not we're going to be on screen for that," says Peele. "When we see the script, we'll ask, Are Key and Peele a distraction from *Police Academy*? We'll make the best call for the movie."

That's not all: At the moment, Key and Peele are also (1) developing a kitten-related action movie called *Keanu*, (2) working on an animated Comedy Central pilot starring their characters Vandaveon and Mike, (3) negotiating with New Line to develop a Peele-penned script, (4) in talks with Paramount to give Mr. Garvey—a.k.a. "Substitute Teacher"—a feature film.

And they've got individual pursuits, too. Key has recurring roles on (5) USA's *Playing House* as well as (6) the upcoming season of NBC's *Parks and Recreation*; Peele is (7) developing a horror (yes, horror) movie that he plans to direct for Darko Entertainment next year and (8) advising the newly formed BuzzFeed Motion Pictures. "I think it's important to us that the *Key & Peele* duo doesn't take away the opportunities of an individual," says Key, adding that he has other writing partners he works with. Peele, meanwhile, harbors ambitions far from the world of comedy. "I want to be a thriller director," he says. "I'm a big fan of *Rosemary's Baby*, *Stepford Wives*—that genre of film," he says. Of course, the last thing they need is another project, but that probably won't stop them.

Actually, if you want to know how busy Key and Peele are, just ask President Obama. Earlier this year, he needed their help. Well, he needed help in general—his hard-fought Affordable Care Act was shaping up to be a tough sell to the public. Luckily, Obama happened to have a pretty good rapport with a couple of guys who've proved themselves savvy at getting their ideas out to large audiences. But the plan hit a snag: The guys were too booked up. "You're going to think this is a joke, but we had to turn him down," says Peele. "We were making the season."

As he says this, it's a hot August afternoon, but he and Key are wearing heavy sweatpants anyway. That's also because of "the season," by which Peele means the fourth season of the series; they'd spent the day shooting as the always sweatpantsed Vandaveon and Mike.

Key nods along. "We were gonna do a bit with him," he says. "We were trying to collaborate with him to make a video for the ACA, and we literally couldn't fit it into our schedule." (POTUS later planted his agenda between two ferns with a guy named Zach Galifianakis.)

"So we were the ones who actually had to relieve the president of *his* duties," Peele continues. "But we still might do it someday. You know, he's a buddy of ours." ■

Mr. Show Does Go On

Bob Odenkirk and David Cross' sketch series **Mr. Show** has legions of fans—including Key and Peele, who gave us a list of burning questions for their comedy idols.

BY DAN SNIERSON

David Cross
and Bob Odenkirk
in 1996

WHEN *MR. SHOW WITH BOB AND DAVID* AIRED from 1995 to 1998, the level of respect that comedy insiders had for the cunning, cutting sketch series was almost inversely proportional to the size of its audience. The lucky few who did tune in to HBO on Fridays at midnight were treated to a half hour of subversive, absurdist sketches all woven together à la *Monty Python's Flying Circus*. Over time, though, through the power of VHS tapes, DVDs, and YouTube clips—and the post-*Show* rise of its writer-producer-stars, Bob Odenkirk (*Breaking Bad*) and David Cross (*Arrested Development*)—the series has transformed from underground gem into...aboveground gem.

Two of the many comedians who claim *Mr. Show* as an influence are EW guest editors Key and Peele. In fact, the duo had a bunch of questions about the series. With Cross, 50, working in London and Odenkirk, 51, filming AMC's *Breaking Bad* prequel, *Better Call Saul*, in Albuquerque, we did something perfectly understandishable: Using telephone magic, we reunited the boys (who are working on some kind of celebration of the show's 20th anniversary "via your television box") to get K&P's questions answered—while sneaking in a few of our own. On with the *Show*!

①_

Keegan wants to know, did you always want to do *Mr. Show* at HBO? Or were you thinking about other networks, too?

BOB ODENKIRK We had HBO or Showtime and that would have been it, right, David? There weren't too many possible options that would've allowed for the freedom of ideas and styles that we wanted to get to.

DAVID CROSS But here was the trade-off: HBO wasn't that big a deal yet. It was still creating an identity for itself, and our show was very low-budget.... HBO was a pretty logical place to go.

BOB And [former HBO execs] Carolyn Strauss and Chris Albrecht were people we knew. But it was really, really hard to sell it. And it was very precarious. David and I put our own money into it.... It was a different world than the one that we have now with *Key & Peele* and *The Birthday Boys* and *Portlandia* and Nick Kroll and Amy Schumer. No one wanted to do sketch.

Sarah Silverman, Cross, and Odenkirk on *Mr. Show*

②_

Who were the performers and writers who influenced your style of comedy? Obviously Monty Python...

BOB I don't think you can avoid how strong an influence [Python] was—they wound their shows together with ideas, and they were absurdist but extremely smart. And not more absurd than they were funny, which I really appreciate, because at some point absurdity is easy to do. So we always wanted to be funny first.

DAVID I was kind of anti–*Saturday Night Live* in how restricted it was, and I thought, "They're doing so many things that are antithetic to good comedy: They're writing for a Top 40 singer and they have to do *this*..." There was a freedom that *Mr. Show* had that in part was looking at what was *the* most successful sketch show and doing things that they didn't do.

③_

Do you wish you had done one more season?

BOB I do. We were on a roll. Our fourth season was really strong. But there are a couple things that conspired against us. One was we got moved to Monday at midnight just two weeks before the premiere. It really felt like the network dropped their support of the show—what little they had just fell away in a crucial moment.

DAVID I would love to [have had] this conversation in the mental state I'm in now, going, "Yeah!" But at the time, I was wrestling with it, which I told Bob later. We finished and we did the Ronnie Dobbs movie [*Run Ronnie Run!*], and I moved immediately to New York. I felt my personal life was not what it should be. It had nothing to do with *Mr. Show*—I'm monstrously appreciative and understand what it did for me and to me—but after four years, I just felt like I needed to do something else.... But I can't tell you I would have said no.

④_

What struck you when you reunited for a live tour last year?

DAVID The one thing I keep noticing is our audience has grown as we have—people who have come to *Mr. Show* because people have given them DVDs or it's on YouTube.... Also, it just feels like we're hitting that really important 18-to-34 demographic in our live shows, and we're selling a lot of jeans, a lot of Scions, and lots of SunnyD. We're moving a *lot* of SunnyD.

BOB I was thrilled by how we worked together and how much fun it was. We made the mistake of starting out in New York and prepping it as we went to smaller cities so, by the end in Portland, it was an incredible show. [*Laughs*]

DAVID I feel confident we'll do it again.

FROM LEFT Cross on *Arrested Development*; Odenkirk on *Breaking Bad*

⑤_

Which sketch show out there do you watch and say, "I wish we had thought of that"?

DAVID I like something that has a bit of a purpose. *Key & Peele* does that, Amy Schumer does that too.... [Key and Peele] are such strong performers. They're at a Fred Armisen level of just inhabiting a character.... The East/West game rosters—I mean, f---. I laugh till it physically hurts. I imagine them writing that and cracking up like Bob and I do when we're writing.

BOB I'm going to vote for *Key & Peele* for performance and writing. And I'm going to ask everyone to give IFC's *The Birthday Boys* a chance [*Odenkirk is an exec producer*].

⑥_

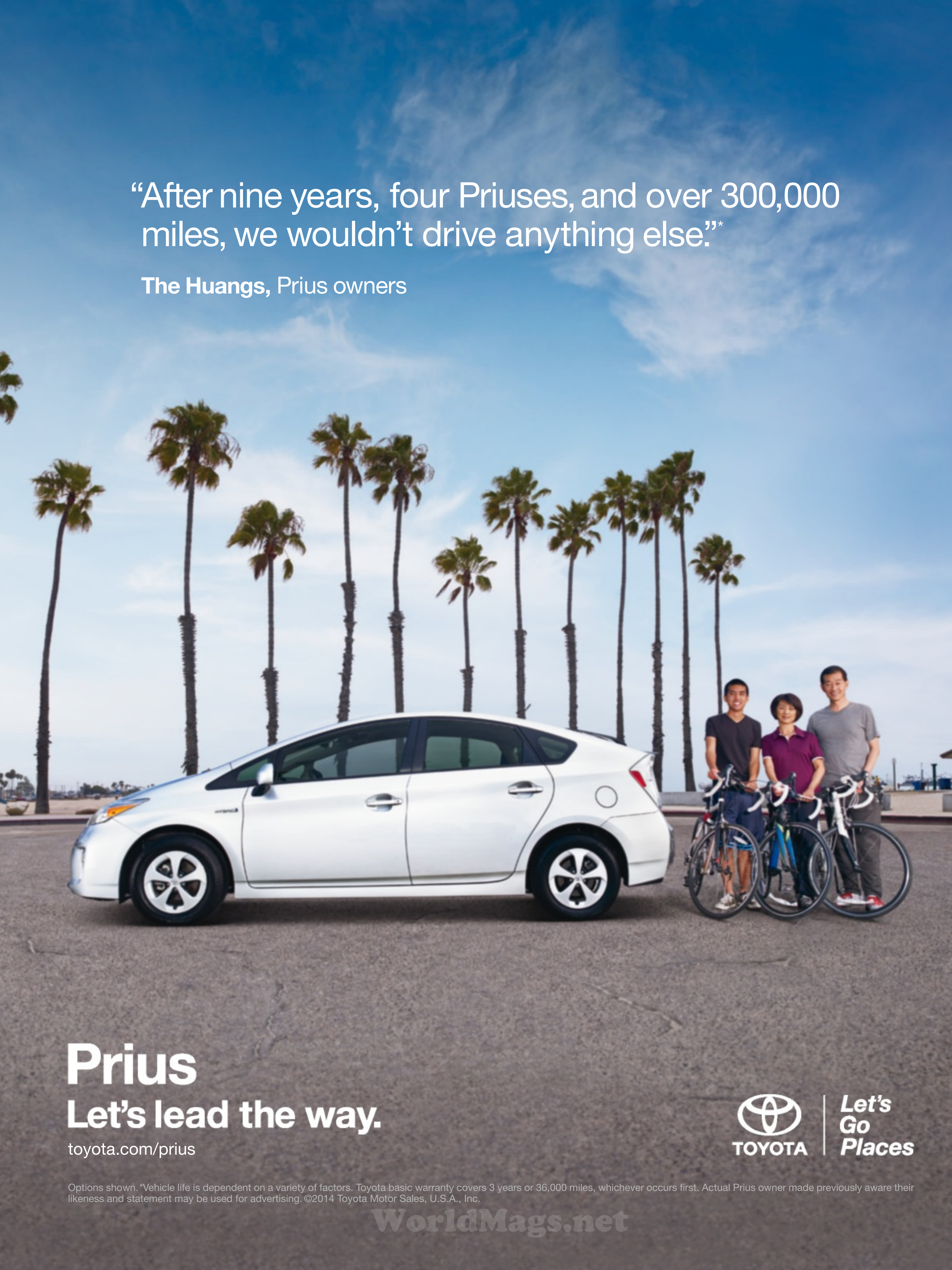
Jordan wants to know, who'd win a physical fight between you two?

DAVID Maybe 10 years ago...me? But not anymore. Bob has a Midwestern thickness. He's stout and taut. And I've let myself go.

BOB I think David would last longer in a fight. If we fight for more than a minute, he wins. So I'd have to put him out really fast.

DAVID Bob's got ham fists, though. Mine are like five Pixy Stix taped to a lollipop. We're two different types: He's UFC, and I'm more of a Muay Thai guy. ■

(PREVIOUS SPREAD) KEY AND PEELE: PHOTOGRAPH BY ART STREIBER; CROSS AND ODENKIRK: ALISON DYER/HBO; (THIS PAGE) *MR. SHOW*: BRILLSTEIN-GREY ENTERTAINMENT/EVERETT COLLECTION; CROSS: SAM URDANK/NETFLIX; ODENKIRK: URSULA COYOTE/AMC


"After nine years, four Priuses, and over 300,000 miles, we wouldn't drive anything else."*
The Huangs, Prius owners
Prius
Let's lead the way.
toyota.com/prius
TOYOTA
Let's Go Places

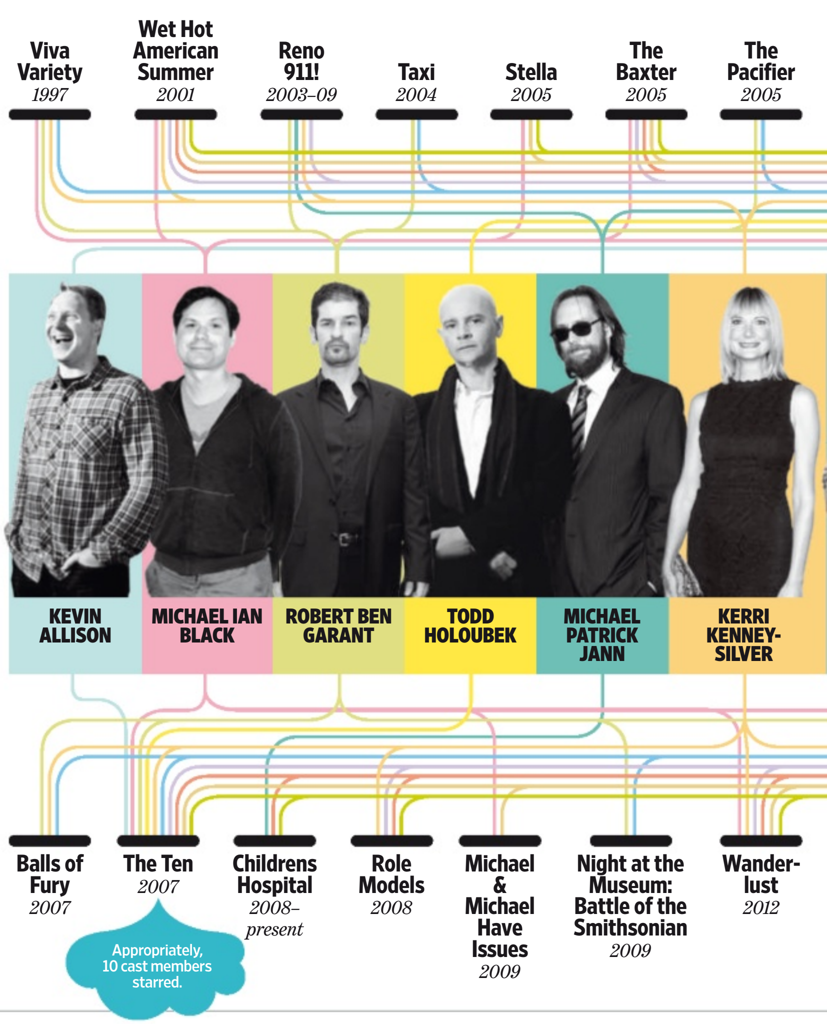
Options shown. *Vehicle life is dependent on a variety of factors. Toyota basic warranty covers 3 years or 36,000 miles, whichever occurs first. Actual Prius owner made previously aware their likeness and statement may be used for advertising. ©2014 Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc.

Binge! The State

WHO THEY ARE

LONG AGO in the dark ages of the 1980s, 11 New York University students formed a sketch troupe called the New Group. The name didn't stick but the group did, and after a stint writing for the Jon Stewart-hosted *You Wrote It, You Watch It*, MTV gave them their own show. The result: 24 episodes of manic, absurd meta-comedy (available on Hulu Plus). "There is something fascinating about how the technique of scenes weaving in and out of each other and sketches picking up where they left off later in the same episode was prevalent in the early '90s," notes Key, who along with co–guest editor Peele curated this binge of *The State*. Though the group's run was brief (they disbanded in 1995 after a failed attempt to go network), it was also glorious, so go ahead and really dip your standards-and-practices-required golf balls in it.

BEYOND *THE STATE* WHETHER WRITING, DIRECTING, OR ACTING,



Viva Variety *1997*

Wet Hot American Summer *2001*

Reno 911! *2003–09*

Taxi *2004*

Stella *2005*

The Baxter *2005*

The Pacifier *2005*

KEVIN ALLISON

MICHAEL IAN BLACK

ROBERT BEN GARANT

TODD HOLOUBEK

MICHAEL PATRICK JANN

KERRI KENNEY-SILVER

Balls of Fury *2007*

The Ten *2007*

Appropriately, 10 cast members starred.

Childrens Hospital *2008–present*

Role Models *2008*

Michael & Michael Have Issues *2009*

Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian *2009*

Wanderlust *2012*

K&P'S FAVORITE CHARACTERS MTV WAS ADAMANT ABOUT INCLUDING RECURRING CHARACTERS, PREFERABLY

Doug

Showalter's punk teen is truly a rebel without a cause—all the authority figures in his life are too understanding for him to rebel against. **STANDOUT SKETCH** "Doug and Dad"

James Dixon

The former Hollywood agent (Lennon) brings his skills to new callings (think Catholic priest, Jedi Master). **STANDOUT SKETCH** "James Dixon: Guidance Counselor"

Louie

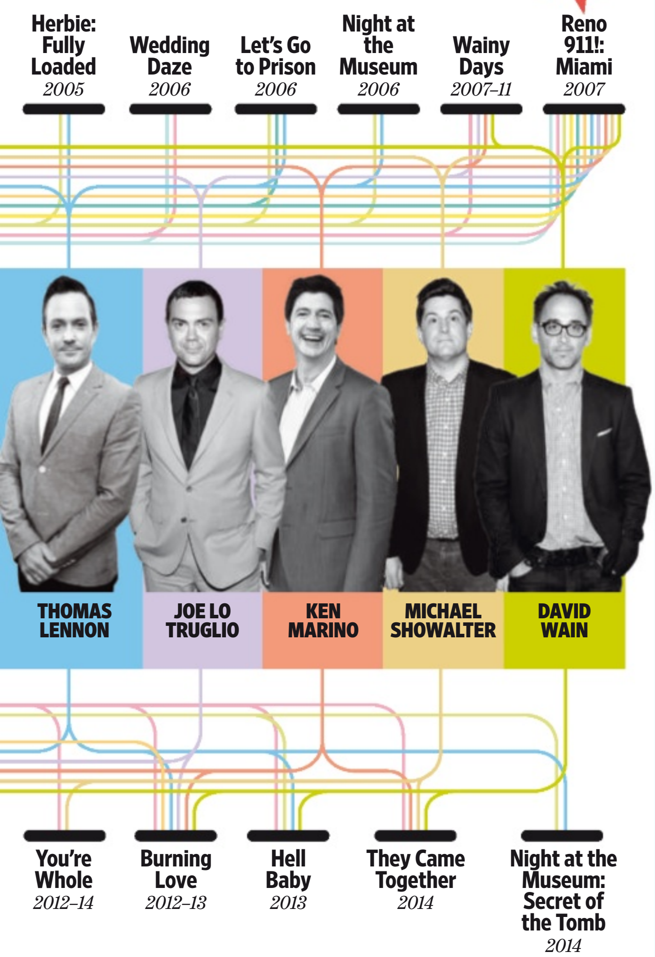
This catchphrase spouter (Marino) bounds into parties declaring, "I wanna dip my balls in it!" while carrying golf balls. **STANDOUT SKETCH** "Louie & the Last Supper"

THE STATE (GROUP): SETH OLENICK/CORBIS OUTLINE; ALLISON: BRAM BELLONI/HOLLANDSE HOOGTE/REDUX; BLACK: ANDREW H. WALKER/GETTY IMAGES; GARANT: MICHAEL STEWART/GETTY IMAGES; HOLOUBEK: SETH OLENICK/CORBIS OUTLINE; JANN: NIKKI NELSON/WENN.COM; KENNEY-SILVER: FRAZER HARRISON/GETTY IMAGES

Key and Peele want you to devour this MTV sketch comedy from the '90s. So dig in. BY KAT WARD

THE GROUP NEVER STOPPED COLLABORATING

All 11 cast members appeared!


Herbie: Fully Loaded 2005
Wedding Daze 2006
Let's Go to Prison 2006
Night at the Museum 2006
Wainy Days 2007–11
Reno 911!: Miami 2007
THOMAS LENNON
JOE LO TRUGLIO
KEN MARINO
MICHAEL SHOWALTER
DAVID WAIN
You're Whole 2012–14
Burning Love 2012–13
Hell Baby 2013
They Came Together 2014
Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb 2014

WITH MERCH-READY CATCHPHRASES

LeVon and Barry
The pair of velvet-blazered, hip-swiveling lounge lizards are played with lascivious glee by Black and Lennon. **STANDOUT SKETCH** "$240 Worth of Pudding"

On-Air Personality
Black delivers "reckless and scathing musings on the industry, all done through a Cheshire-cat grin," say Key and Peele. **STANDOUT SKETCH** "On-Air Personality"

LENNON: CHRISTOPHER POLK/CBS VIA GETTY IMAGES; LO TRUGLIO: BEN GABBE/GETTY IMAGES; MARINO: CHRISTOPHER POLK/GETTY IMAGES; SHOWALTER: PETER KRAMER/NBCU PHOTO BANK/BRAVO VIA GETTY IMAGES; WAIN: ILYA S. SAVENOK/GETTY IMAGES; KEY AND PEELE: PHOTOGRAPH BY ART STREIBER; GOTTFRIED: NEILSON BARNARD/GETTY IMAGES; STEWART, COOPER: MICHAEL TRAN/FILMMAGIC.COM (2)

THE BEST SKETCHES

"Boogeyman" *Season 1, episode 1*
The series' very first sketch is a sly play on every kid's monster-under-the-bed nightmare, setting—as Key and Peele put it—"the absurdist, fantastical, and dark tone of the show."

"Bookworm" *Season 2, episode 3*
A jock's quest to find the perfect word with which to taunt a voracious reader. It's also a winning example of *The State*'s commitment to solid writing and fondness for segues between unrelated sketches.

"Porcupine Racetrack"
Season 3, episode 6
This one's the best combination of *The State*'s lunacy (a Broadway number about racing rodents) and love of meta-commentary.

"The Jew, the Italian, and the Redhead Gay II," Parts 1 and 2
Season 4, episode 2
"A parody of *Charlie's Angels* with a fun socio-racial twist" is how Key describes this sketch, centering on a trio searching for an Irishman at the behest of their boss, a WASP named Michael.

NOTABLE CAMEOS

Gilbert Gottfried
The comedian appears in a season 1 segue in which he berates Allison for asking for crackers with his soup.

Jon Stewart
The future *Daily Show* host guests in an interstitial where he's going through MTV's fan-mail box.

Alice Cooper
The rocker makes a blink-and-you'll-miss-it cameo in a sketch about a man who discovers the word *and*.

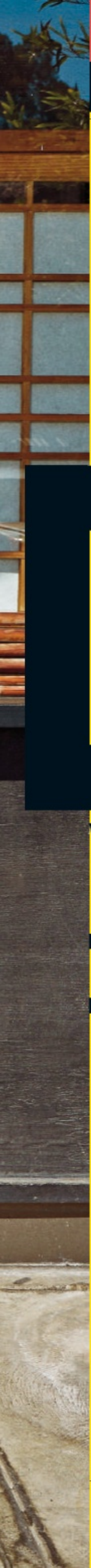
WHEN YOU'RE DONE

STATE BY STATE
with THE STATE

The State left behind a few artifacts for the unsated fan. *State by State With the State*, published in 1997, is a mock travel guide filled with unhelpful and broadly untruthful tips and facts. For those in pursuit of the obscure, there's the album *Comedy for Gracious Living* (a once-bootlegged unicorn for *State* obsessives). Recorded in 1996, it was shelved until 2010, when it was finally released. And there looks to be some glimmer of hope for that rumored *State* movie. "It'd be a herculean scheduling task, but I think we'll do it one of these days," Wain tells EW. In the meantime, you can catch them at Festival Supreme on Oct. 25 in L.A.

Total run time
8 hrs., 37 mins.

Chelsea Peretti and Ike Barinholtz photographed on Sept. 12, 2014, at Asanebo in Studio City, Calif.



Blind Date

WITH Chelsea Peretti AND Ike Barinholtz

When Key and Peele asked us to profile these red-hot comics, we decided to arrange a platonic hang. **They had plenty to say about Hollywood, comedy—and how we should start this story.**

BY **DARREN FRANICH** PHOTOGRAPHS BY **NOAH WEBB**

“CHELSEA PERETTI IS LATE AS USUAL” will be the first sentence of this story, if Ike Barinholtz has his way. Peretti is indeed running late to lunch at Asanebo here in Studio City. Barinholtz arrived at the sushi restaurant on time, and he’s more proud of his punctuality with every passing Peretti-free minute. (“Actually,” he amends, “let’s open with ‘Ike cut his meeting with Steven Spielberg short to arrive on time.’”) We’re down the street from the Fox lot—home to the set of *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, where Peretti, 36, stars as the acerbic, too-cool-for-school Gina Linetti, and *The Mindy Project*, where Barinholtz, 37, writes and plays the wacky, too-weird-for-this-world Morgan Tookers.

Their résumés are as different as their characters. Barinholtz was a member of the Amsterdam comedy troupe Boom Chicago, whose alumni also include Seth Meyers...and Jordan Peele. Five years on *MADtv* (and a one-season role as a Russian ballplayer on *Eastbound & Down*) led to *Mindy*, which in turn led to parts on Meyers’ Hulu animated series *The Awesomes* and in the upcoming Tina Fey/Amy Poehler comedy *The Nest*. Peretti was a stand-up who minted her comedy cred writing for *Parks and Recreation* and *Kroll Show* and appearing on holy-grail auteur-coms *Louie* and *The Sarah Silverman Program*. Now she’s a regular on *Brooklyn*, not to mention the star of her own ongoing podcast, *Call Chelsea Peretti*, and stand-up special, *One of the Greats*, which debuts Nov. 14 on Netflix.

Peretti and Barinholtz are both prime examples of our modern multihyphenate comedy culture:

writer-actors whose extracurricular activities are at least as important as their sitcom day jobs. A lunch with them could very well provide insight into the whole nature of modern comedy.

Of course, first we have to actually get them together. After a flurry of texts and emoji—"She wrote: skull, skull, skull, skull, sad face, skull," says Barinholtz—Peretti arrives, and the riffing begins.

* * *

Chelsea, what would you like the first sentence of the story to be?

CHELSEA "Chelsea walked in at 12 on the dot. She was warm and approachable."

IKE "Early as usual, Peretti sashayed in."

Well-regarded comedians Key and Peele have taken over our magazine. Where did you meet them?

IKE I met Jordan Peele in Amsterdam at a theater called Boom Chicago. I came to Los Angeles, and I started working on *MADtv*. And I was like, "Oh, you need to hire this guy, 'cause he's so funny." Key and I met at Second City. It was a similar thing where *MADtv* was like, "Oh, we saw this guy," and I was like, "Oh, he's amazing." So they can thank me for their careers.

CHELSEA Can I do the headline of the story? *Barinholtz Not a Huge Presence at Lunch; Peretti Shines.*

Where did you meet Key and/or Peele, Chelsea?

CHELSEA Me and Jordan also met on the Internet, on Twitter. He was very complimentary of the Web series I once did. We were gonna go to Sizzler on our first... Am I supposed to talk about the fact that we live together? [*Laughs*] Or should I pretend he's a business colleague?

This week, Key and Peele are my bosses. What should I know about them to suck up?

IKE Keegan's more in-your-face nice. "Hey, man, how are you? Good morning. You look amazing. You are blessed. I am blessed. Go, brother." And Jordan's more quiet-nice. "Hey, man, how are you, man? Whatever."

CHELSEA Jordan gets into long conversations with everyone at parties. He won't shut it down at all.

[*Barinholtz picks up a piece of sashimi with his hands.*]

CHELSEA Let it be known Ike just used fingers to pick up a piece of sashimi.

IKE Let it be known that the number one sushi chef in the world recently said you're supposed to eat sushi with your fingers.

CHELSEA Sushi. Not sashimi.

IKE Goddamn it.

CHELSEA "Peretti completely destroyed his entire line of argument."

I've lost track. What's the headline of the story now?

IKE *Barinholtz Scores Big at Lunch.*

CHELSEA *Chelsea Kills; Barinholtz Weaker, but Still Great.* What would I have to do to get removed from this article entirely? If I had a horrible allegation against me, like a murder, would you make it just *Lunch With Ike*?

IKE You'd be the cover! *Murderer's Last Interview!*

CHELSEA The new headline should be: *Aggressive Presence From Both.*

What were the most traumatizing moments you guys experienced when you were coming up?

IKE I auditioned for *CSI*. I had to do this monologue while I was getting stabbed. I was playing a Quentin Tarantino-ish director, and I was like, "So we're gonna have the lights over here... Ahhh! Ugh! Stop stabbing me!" And the director started laughing. It was embarrassing.

CHELSEA I did a show one time where absolutely no one looked at me in the entire audience. And then when I was done the MC was like, "She wasn't funny, but I'd f--- her."

IKE Come on.

CHELSEA I invited my brother and his girlfriend. Which is just not good thinking. No one looked at me, and then the whole subway back, I was just crying.

You are both on major network shows now. Do you feel like you've made it?

CHELSEA Everyone I know is on a TV show.

IKE Everyone is like, "I'm on a new show." "On what?" "It's on Netscape."

CHELSEA I would rather be a young comedian now than in the '80s. There is so much you can do now.

How do you guys write? What's your process?

IKE I like to put on my underwear and lay in bed like a prisoner who has given up. I heard Robert Evans used to stay in bed till noon and eat cheesecake. And then he'd go produce *The Godfather*. I'm the Robert Evans of the show. I think I'm comfortable saying that.

CHELSEA I would love when I was off on script for *Parks*, because you can be in your PJs, make coffee, and lay on a couch under blankets. Anytime I can be on a couch under blankets, I'm at a hundred percent. Oh my God, I just thought of something! If I ever have my own writers' room, what if it was all fainting couches?

IKE So it's like an opium den.

CHELSEA Yeah! That would be amazing.

IKE This is a great idea.

CHELSEA This was all off the record, right? ■

Wish you could have lunch with Ike and Chelsea?

Try the next best thing: Get takeout and check them out on Twitter: @ikebarinholtz and @chelseavperetti

Ones to Watch

THE NEXT IKE AND CHELSEA ARE ALREADY OUT THERE—MAYBE EVEN ON THIS LIST OF KEY AND PEELE'S FAVORITE ON-THE-RISE COMICS. ● **BY LINDSEY BAHR**

JUSTIN HIRES
A *Key & Peele* regular, the *21 Jump Street* standout is part of MTV's latest prank show, *Jerks With Cameras*.

TIM ROBINSON AND SAM RICHARDSON
Key protégés, these Second City alums are members of the comedy team Cook County Social Club. "They're about to explode," says Key.

JUSTIN PEELE
Jordan's cousin Justin has a fresh take on race-based comedy. "He has cool, kind-of-21st-century observations," says Key.

KING BACH
The Vine star has racked up over 8.3 million followers with his sketches. "Jordan showed him to me one day, and he blew me away," says Key.

BRENDON WALSH
"He's a perpetual prankster and really relishes being antagonistic," Peele says. "He's a breed that I don't see a lot of in the stand-up world these days."

LENNON PARHAM AND JESSICA ST. CLAIR
Key, who costars on their USA show, *Playing House*, calls the duo "a female Laurel and Hardy."

YASSIR LESTER
Lester recently showcased his whip-smart humor as a judge on MTV's new series *Snack-Off*.

JERROD CARMICHAEL
His stand-up has earned him a pilot in development at NBC and an HBO special on Oct. 4. "He uses his charm to be able to deliver really subversive material in a really palatable way," says Peele.

GARFUNKEL AND OATES
Key is high on Riki Lindhome and Kate Micucci, the stars of the IFC series: "They do really provocative stuff, but they handle it with deftness."

LITTLE ESTHER
Her quirky, awkward comedy—most famously on display in her MTV (Other) Web series *Esther With Hot Chicks*—scored her an upcoming role on *Key & Peele*.

PHOTO SHOOT LOCATION: ASANEBO RESTAURANT, STUDIO CITY; KEY AND PEELE: PHOTOGRAPH BY ART STREIBER; HIRES: BRYAN BEDDER/GETTY IMAGES; JUSTIN PEELE: JUSTIN PEELE; WALSH: NEILSON BARNARD/GETTY IMAGES FOR COMEDY CENTRAL; PARHAM AND ST. CLAIR: DAVE KOTINSKY/BRAVO/NBCU PHOTO BANK VIA GETTY IMAGES; CARMICHAEL: MICHAEL SCHWARTZ/WIREIMAGE.COM; ESTHER: JOE SCARNICI/GETTY IMAGES FOR COMEDY CENTRAL

KEY & PEELE'S COMEDY Syllabus

What are the essential sketches, performers, and shows every comedy nerd should know? **Our guest editors offer a master class.**

1 EDDIE MURPHY

KEY "I don't know if there's ever been anybody in history working at a level like he was working at. To have that much talent, that much charm, that much discipline, all of that wrapped up into one. To think about *48 HRS.*, *Trading Places*. Aw, man!"

PEELE "If I had a kid and I wanted to form him into a perfect comedy nerd, I would tell him to watch the *Saturday Night Live* sketch where he puts on whiteface and he goes on the bus, and the last [nonwhite] guy walks off the bus and everyone starts a party."

② "WHO'S ON FIRST?" ROUTINE

ABBOTT AND COSTELLO 1938

Says Key, "It's one of the best constructed comedic things that's ever existed in the English language."

③ "WORD ASSOCIATION" SKETCH

SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE 1975

SNL host Richard Pryor plays a job applicant who is enraged by Chevy Chase's racist vocabulary during a word-association test. (Chase: "Jungle bunny." Pryor: "Honky." Chase: "Spade." Pryor: "Honky honky." Chase: "N---er." Pryor: "Dead honky.") "This is my favorite *SNL* sketch," says Key. "Peter Sellers and Richard Pryor, they're it for me. They are beyond."

④ "DEAD PARROT" SKETCH

MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS 1969

In the most famous skit from the iconic comedy show, Michael Palin's pet-store owner refuses to admit that a parrot he has sold to John Cleese's character has, in fact, shuffled off this mortal coil. "It's classic Python absurdism," says Key. "It beats a joke into the ground to get extra laughs, which I think only masters can do. If you're new at that, you shouldn't even tread on those waters."

MURPHY IN *48 HRS.*: PARAMOUNT PICTURES/PHOTOFEST; ON *SNL*: NBC/PHOTOFEST; IN *TRADING PLACES*: PARAMOUNT/KOBAL COLLECTION; ABBOTT & COSTELLO: COURTESY EVERETT COLLECTION; *MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS*: PYTHON PICTURES/RONALD GRANT/EVERETT COLLECTION

5

MORK & MINDY 1978–82

The wildly popular *Happy Days* spin-off starred the late Robin Williams, Pam Dawber, and, toward the end of its run, Williams' comedy idol Jonathan Winters. "*Mork & Mindy* blew my mind. Like, 'A person can do that?'" says Key. "Pam Dawber is just stuck in between these two irresistible forces that couldn't be stopped."

6

"D--- IN A BOX" SHORT

***SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE* 2006**

Andy Samberg's Lonely Island crew teamed with Justin Timberlake for this genital-obsessed R&B parody. "It's so thick with laughs," says Key. "It's prurient material, but it just blows me away how well constructed that piece is."

7

BILL COSBY

"No one can wield a story the way he can wield a story, and vividly play the characters inside the story at the same time," says Key. "And he *changed* television. He's just amazing and still has it in his late 70s."

8

THE OFFICE

U.K. VERSION

2001–03

"You have to watch every episode of *The Office*," says Peele. "That was a game changer as far as tone for me."

9

FAWLTY TOWERS

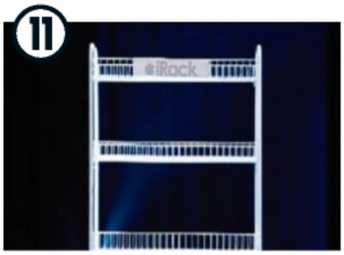
1975 & 1979

Monty Python comedy-troupe member John Cleese co-wrote this classic sitcom and also perfectly played the lead role of snobbish, employee-abusing hotelier Basil Fawlty.

10

LENNY HENRY

Though unfamiliar in the U.S., the actor and stand-up has been one of the most famous comedians in the U.K. since he was a presenter on the anarchic children's TV show *Tiswas* back in the '70s. Henry's other credits include the sketch show *Three of a Kind*, which costarred Tracey Ullman, and the sitcom *Chef!*



11

"THE iRACK" SKETCH

***MADtv* 2007**

"Michael McDonald was playing Steve Jobs, and he was talking about the iRack, which was a new product, which was just a rack," says Key. "Everybody at the launch is talking to him: 'The iRack looks unstable.' The whole sketch is an analogy of what was happening in Iraq. *MADtv* was known for a lot of fantastically funny puerile stuff, but I thought this was a clever, scathing satirical scene."

12

"OFFENSIVE TRANSLATOR" SKETCH

***THE CATHERINE TATE SHOW* 2006**

Tate is a British actress (*Doctor Who*, NBC's *The Office*) and comic whose characters include the misguidedly confident Helen "I can do that!" Marsh. In this sketch, Marsh volunteers to translate CEOs at a multinational business summit. Instead, she lets loose a string of gibberish-filled imitations of their native tongues. "I just can't stop laughing at it. It's so silly," says Key.

13

VEEP 2012–PRESENT

"*Veep* is so well written but also so well acted," says Key. "A lot of that has to do with Allison Jones, who's the casting person. There's a poetry in the way [show creator] Armando Iannucci and his writers write those words."

MORK & MINDY: PARAMOUNT TELEVISION/EVERETT COLLECTION; *SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE*: DANA EDELSON/NBC; *THE COSBY SHOW*: JOHN FAULKNER/NBC; *THE OFFICE*, HENRY: BBC (2); *FAWLTY TOWERS*: EVERETT COLLECTION; *VEEP*: LACEY TERRELL/HBO

14

THAT MITCHELL AND WEBB LOOK 2006–10

The creators of this British sketchfest are David Mitchell and Robert Webb, who also star on the beloved cult sitcom *Peep Show*. "There's a sketch where they're playing Nazis, and one of them says, 'Hans, have you noticed our caps have skulls on them? Hans...are we the baddies?'" says Key. "A lot of what Jordan and I wanted to do initially with *Key & Peele* is influenced by Mitchell and Webb."

15

"CROWN HEIGHTS STORY" SKETCH

IN LIVING COLOR 1991

"They did a parody of *West Side Story* that was Hasidic Jews and black people," says Peele. "And it was just very well put together. We love realizing full musical numbers. I'm a fan of all that stuff."

16

TINA FEY & AMY POEHLER

"If you want to understand a certain type of comedy, you *have* to pay attention to people like Amy and Tina, who are Chicago comedy people," says Key. "There's a style there that is indicative of really quality thought-out comedy in the 21st century."

17

"TOONCES THE DRIVING CAT" SKETCHES *SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE* 1989–93

One of *SNL*'s most bizarre recurring characters, the feline Toonces could drive a car—but not very well! "That one's huge. That was one of the first sketches I saw that really embraced a childlike silliness," says Peele. "I always talk about the difference between *ha-ha* laughter and *aha* laughter. Ultimately, I think the heady stuff is something that everybody has different opinions on. The stupid-funny is just more universal."

18

YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN & *BLAZING SADDLES*

1974

Legendary comedy director Mel Brooks spoofed Universal monster movies in *Young Frankenstein* and—with help from co-writer Richard Pryor—Westerns in *Blazing Saddles*, both in 1974. The films have since become classics themselves, inspiring generations of comedians to mix lowbrow humor (like *Saddles*' groundbreaking wind-breaking scene) with high-concept genre parody.

19

STEVE COOGAN & ROB BRYDON

The two comic actors have now played highly convincing, frenemy-ish versions of themselves in three Michael Winterbottom-directed films: 2006's *Tristram Shandy: A Cock and Bull Story*, 2011's *The Trip*, and its recently released sequel, *The Trip to Italy*. "There's such a verisimilitude to everything that they do," says Key. "But still there are always the really fun laugh-out-loud moments in the midst of all of it."

20

RICHARD PRYOR

"Think about how amazing, how unearthly good Richard Pryor was," says Key. "And think about the fact that he was fettered by drugs. Imagine if he wasn't. What would that have been?"

THAT MITCHELL AND WEBB LOOK: BBC; FEY AND POEHLER: DANA EDELSON/NBC; *SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE*: RAYMOND BONAR/NBCU PHOTO BANK/GETTY IMAGES; KEY AND PEELE: PHOTOGRAPH BY ART STREIBER; *YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN*: © BETTMANN/CORBIS; GENE WILDER: WARNER BROS./PHOTOFEST; CLEAVON LITTLE: EVERETT COLLECTION; COOGAN AND BRYDON: PHIL FISK; PRYOR: AP IMAGES

21

THE TRACEY ULLMAN SHOW 1987–90

The Emmy-winning (and *Simpsons*-birthing) sketch series was a showcase for the Brit entertainer's skills as a comedian and mimic. "To see a person who's experiencing sheer joy when they perform, watch any episode, any season, of *The Tracey Ullman Show*," says Key.

22

PETER COOK & DUDLEY MOORE

Cook and Moore first found fame in the early '60s as members of the satirical stage revue *Beyond the Fringe*, which played on London's West End and Broadway. The pair subsequently starred on the TV show *Not Only… But Also* and in the films *The Wrong Box* (1966) and *Bedazzled* (1967), plus recorded a series of deliberately disgusting "Derek and Clive" albums. "The fun they have with each other is infectious," says Key. "Dudley Moore was just a heavyweight, and he's one of those guys that we forget about."

23

THE MARX BROTHERS

"Anything the Marx Brothers did with Paramount, their early movies, is good—so from *The Cocoanuts* to *Animal Crackers*," says Key. "I prefer *Animal Crackers* over *Duck Soup*. But in a comedy syllabus, you should watch *Duck Soup*. Shouldn't be that big of a deal: It's not a long movie!"

24

PETER SELLERS

Sellers earned acclaim in his native U.K. with the '50s radio show *The Goon Show*, became a global star as Inspector Clouseau in the Pink Panther films, and scored Academy Award nods for 1964's *Dr. Strangelove* and 1979's *Being There*. "He's so heartbreaking and hilarious in *Being There*," says Key. "That was robbery, that he didn't win an Oscar."

25

"THE AUDITION" SKETCH

MR. SHOW WITH BOB AND DAVID 1998

An actor (David Cross) does a monologue from a play called *The Audition* at an actual audition, causing confusion. "It messes with your reality," says Peele. "If you keep the audience off balance, you can come at them with something they weren't expecting more easily." (See page 38 for more on *Mr. Show*.)

26

"SOUND NAME" SKETCH

A BIT OF FRY & LAURIE 1989

Before Hugh Laurie was House, he and Stephen Fry had a BBC sketch show that featured this elegantly surreal skit, in which Fry's policeman is bemused by the insistence of Laurie's character that his surname is the sound of a cigarette lighter dropping onto a desk. "They'll break the fourth wall or in the midst of a sketch break the convention of the sketch," says Key.

27

WAITING FOR GUFFMAN 1997

Filmmaker Christopher Guest plays, wonderfully, a theater director in this tale of small-town thespianism. Costars include Guest regulars Eugene Levy, Parker Posey, Catherine O'Hara, and Fred Willard.

28

MR. BEAN 1990–95

British TV star Rowan Atkinson has played two classic comedy characters: the verbose Blackadder and the rubber-limbed lead character of the massively successful *Mr. Bean*. "*Mr. Bean* is something I've always enjoyed," says Key. "That kind of physical comedy is really important to me."

ULLMAN: FOX/PHOTOFEST (2); ULLMAN (BOTTOM LEFT): R. ROBINSON/FOX; *BEYOND THE FRINGE*, *A BIT OF FRY & LAURIE*: BBC (2); MARX BROTHERS: MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES; SELLERS: EVERETT COLLECTION; *MR. SHOW*: BONNIE SCHIFFMAN/HBO; *WAITING FOR GUFFMAN*: CASTLE ROCK ENTERTAINMENT/PHOTOFEST; *MR. BEAN*: ITV/EVERETT COLLECTION

Movies

Rosamund Pike and Ben Affleck

MERRICK MORTON

Gone Girl

STARRING *Ben Affleck, Rosamund Pike, Kim Dickens, Carrie Coon, Tyler Perry*
DIRECTED BY *David Fincher*
R, 2 HRS., 28 MINS.

By Chris Nashawaty

IT'S OKAY to be nervous. Our first instinct when a beloved book is turned into a movie is to get up on our hind legs and anticipate all the ways that Hollywood will get it wrong. Two summers ago, you couldn't walk through an airport or ride the subway without spotting half-devoured copies of Gillian Flynn's bruise-black thriller *Gone Girl* everywhere you looked. And for good reason. It was the rare page-turner that balanced beautiful writing, breathless pacing, and booby-trap plot twists that landed with the brass-knuckle force of a sucker punch. Not surprisingly, it was quickly optioned and fast-tracked into one of the most eagerly anticipated films of the fall, with David Fincher behind the camera and Flynn (a former EW colleague of mine) adapting her own story for the screen. There were reasons to be wary, of course. Was Ben Affleck too smug—and let's face it, too on-the-nose—to play the callow Nick Dunne? Was Rosamund Pike too icily ethereal and untested to play his missing wife, Amy? And how would the film handle the novel's just-short-of-preposterous Big Reveal? Well, the answers are no, no, and...masterfully. Fincher and Flynn's film gets just about everything right.

It's hard to discuss a movie like *Gone Girl* without giving too much away. (There must be some people out there who haven't read it yet, right?) But I'll try anyway. Both a bleak snapshot of modern love gone toxic and a razor-toothed satire of tabloid-era sensationalism, the film tells the nightmare story of Nick and Amy Dunne, a fairy-tale couple whose marriage has soured into a curdled stew of resentment, hostility, and possibly murder. On the morning of their fifth anniversary, Amy disappears from their suburban Missouri home, leaving behind upturned furniture, shattered glass, and traces of blood. Nick, a self-absorbed bar owner who's curiously unflustered by his wife's absence, quickly becomes the police's prime suspect. His alibi is hardly airtight; worse, Amy's diary paints him as unfaithful and short-tempered. Is she dead or just simply...*gone*? We've all seen this sort of scenario on countless fearmongering episodes of *Dateline* and *The First 48*. But what makes *Gone Girl* so intoxicating is the way the mystery unfolds. As Nick explains his side of the story to a pair of detectives (Kim Dickens and Patrick Fugit) who aren't buying what he's selling, the missing Amy tells hers through voice-overs and flashbacks.

Affleck and Tyler Perry

The movie asks: How much did Nick know about his wife? But what it's *really* asking the audience is: How much do any of us know about our partners? As Nick, Affleck gives what may be the most natural performance of his career. He's confident without being cocky, charming without being smarmy. You get the sense that his cruel season under the media's magnifying glass with J. Lo wasn't entirely for naught. And as Amy, Pike summons levels of depth and daring she's never been asked to grapple with before. Fincher uses the same deliberateness with every casting choice here. As Nick's sister Margo, Carrie Coon gives the film its gallows humor and spikiest laughs, and Tyler Perry is the epitome of calculating oiliness as Nick's high-priced defense attorney. (Who knew?) Conducting it all like a true-crime Toscanini is Fincher—a mischievous maestro who turns the film into the puzzle-box workout that his 1997 brainteaser *The Game* wanted to be. I can't guarantee that the ending will work for everyone (it was always my one nit to pick with Flynn's novel). But I will say this: Anyone who loved *Gone Girl* the book will walk out of *Gone Girl* the movie with a sick grin on their face. You can stop being nervous. **A**

AS NICK, BEN AFFLECK GIVES WHAT MAY BE THE MOST NATURAL PERFORMANCE OF HIS CAREER. HE'S CONFIDENT WITHOUT BEING COCKY, CHARMING WITHOUT BEING SMARMY.

CRITICAL MASS

For 10 current releases, we compare EW's grade with scores averaged from IMDb, Metacritic, and Rotten Tomatoes

	EW	IMDb, METACRITIC, ROTTEN TOMATOES			AVG.
BOYHOOD	A	88	100	99	96
GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY	A–	86	76	92	85
LOVE IS STRANGE	A	70	83	98	84
THE DROP	B	80	69	88	79
↑ TRACKS	A	72	79	83	78
THE MAZE RUNNER	B–	79	57	61	66
THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ELEANOR RIGBY	B	71	58	62	64
A WALK AMONG THE TOMBSTONES	B	71	53	64	63
THIS IS WHERE I LEAVE YOU	C	57	45	45	49
NO GOOD DEED	C	59	25	11	32

GONE GIRL: MERRICK MORTON; *TRACKS*: MATT NETTHEIM

BEHIND THE SCENES

This Is Where I Leave You

Jane Fonda flashes crew members, and Tina Fey makes babies cry. EW uncovered these secrets—and much more—last year on the set of the dysfunctional-family dramedy based on Jonathan Tropper's acclaimed 2009 novel. —ANTHONY BREZNICAN

ONE OF THE STRANGEST THINGS an actor has to do for a movie is hand over the past. Family snapshots, school portraits, wedding photos, baby pictures—once they get the Photoshop treatment, an alterna-history shared by costars is born.

Altered images figure heavily in the background of *This Is Where I Leave You*, the bittersweet family comedy (now in theaters) based on Jonathan Tropper's 2009 best-seller. Directed by Shawn Levy with a screenplay by Tropper, the movie stars Jason Bateman, Tina Fey, Corey Stoll, and Adam Driver as four siblings who reluctantly reunite in their childhood home after the death of their father. Their newly widowed mother (Jane Fonda) is pushing her fractious brood to remember happier times, and every shelf, end table, and bare stretch of wall in the Long Island home where the movie was shot last year is covered with framed fauxtographs in which cast members' faces appear on other people's bodies.

"Jane Fonda's daughter was here visiting, and she was like, 'That's your head on me as a child!' " Fey says, standing in her character's former bedroom. "There's a picture on the stairwell right now that's me and Jane, but originally it's me and Amy Poehler at an improv festival. I sent that to Amy." Fey tightens her mouth. "She needs to know that I can do that at any time."

In that spirit, EW compiled our own scrapbook of memorable moments from an exclusive set visit in June 2013.

Filming is just getting started for the day, and Fey has already made two babies wail. Kids melting down are an occupational hazard in movies about families, and the 8-month-old in Fey's lap won't stop improvising her own tantrum. The infant's twin is brought in—and promptly freaks out too. "I continue to plead my case that it's not me, but every time we put a baby in my hands, it's terrified and it screams and cries," Fey says. "It's called stranger danger, and I'm the new face of it."

Not making children weep? Driver, who, at 30, still feels at home at the kiddie table and entertains his pint-size costars when they get tired or fussy. "Kids, they're awesome actors," he says. "They're totally

MORE ON EW.COM To see additional exclusive photos and read more about this film, check out our long-form online feature at *ew.com/TIWILY*

ALL IN THE FAMILY (Clockwise from left) Shawn Levy (center) gathers with (clockwise from top) Timothy Olyphant, Debra Monk, Ben Schwartz, Corey Stoll, Jane Fonda, Connie Britton, Kathryn Hahn, Jason Bateman, and Tina Fey; Fey and an uncharacteristically serene baby; Levy and Fonda

free. We were doing one scene where [a 3-year-old] comes in, and he's supposed to use the restroom—and he did. He came in and pissed right in the little potty. He wasn't scared of anything."

"Method actor," Fey says.

Bateman, who plays the jilted and jobless sad-sack eldest brother, Judd, is both the narrator of Tropper's novel and the anchor of Levy's film, the fractured lens through which the audience sees his equally damaged family. The *Arrested Development* actor was the only holdover from an earlier effort to adapt the book with *Hairspray* director Adam Shankman. That version would have starred Jason Sudeikis, Zac Efron, and Leslie Mann as the other siblings and Goldie Hawn as the mother. "I felt very lucky to have made that cut," says Bateman. So...he's sort of the lone wolf of the pack, right? "The lone teen wolf," the *Teen Wolf Too* star deadpans.

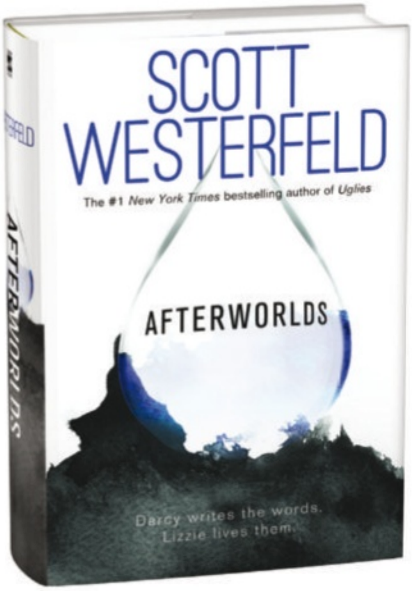
Although Judd shoulders many of the story's indignities, his siblings all get their moment to cringe. Take the sex scene that Stoll and Kathryn Hahn had to shoot—with audio only. "It's hard to do without actually physically doing a little air-humping," says Stoll, whose character's wife (Hahn) is so desperate to become pregnant that she makes him sneak away for a little shivah delight, not realizing there's a baby monitor that broadcasts their lovemaking to a living room full of mourners. When they recorded the *ooh*s and *mmm*s and *ahh*s, Hahn says, "I felt like I was going to pass out afterward because we were just heavy breathing for a long time."

Imagine doing that in front of Fonda, whose intimidating presence was second only to her breasts—or rather the fake ones created for her character's recent augmentation. "It was prosthetics, but to Jane it felt like she was wearing armor," Levy says. "She's like, 'Don't you love my boobs?' She's fondling them and shoving them at me. I was like, 'Jane, this is really troubling.' And on the walk from hair and makeup to the set, she was flashing drivers. To her, it was just super fun."

Surprisingly, no one thought to employ Fonda's fake mammaries to distract the squawking babies.

Which is probably for the best.

JESSICA MIGLIO (3)


SCOTT WESTERFELD
The #1 New York Times bestselling author of Uglies
AFTERWORLDS
Darcy writes the words. Lizzie lives them.
AFTERWORLDS

AN *ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY* "YA NOVEL TO WATCH OUT FOR."

In his stunning new novel, Scott Westerfeld tells two stories. One of a soon-to-be published YA author, the other of the novel she is writing.

"I recognize nothing of myself or any of my friends in this book."
—John Green, author of *The Fault in Our Stars*

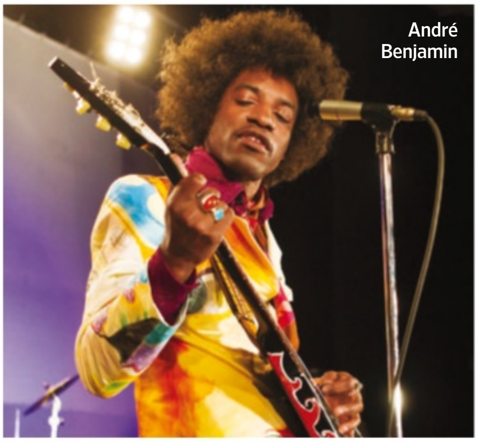
AFTERWORLDSBOOK.COM

SIMON PULSE

Jimi: All Is by My Side

STARRING *André Benjamin, Imogen Poots, Hayley Atwell*
DIRECTED BY *John Ridley*
R, 1 HR., 56 MINS. By Chris Nashawaty

John Ridley's new film about Jimi Hendrix, *Jimi: All Is by My Side*, is not a biopic. At least not in the traditional sense. It isn't interested in the full sweep of the man's too-short life or in dutifully dropping the needle on his greatest hits. It's a snapshot of one year, an origin story about the moment in 1966–67 that Hendrix went from unknown backup musician playing half-empty New York clubs to the toast of London, on his way to becoming the most incendiary rock icon of his generation. Ridley, the Oscar-winning writer of *12 Years a Slave*, makes his feature directorial debut here, and it's clear that he's a born filmmaker. He's also got a hell of an eye for casting. André Benjamin, from OutKast (see story, page 70), is perfect as Hendrix, nailing his look (the teased-out nimbus of hair and groovy Carnaby Street threads) as well as his space-cadet cadences, his selfish dark side, and the way he comes alive on stage. When he plugs his Stratocaster into the amp, it's not just the instrument that becomes electrified, it's his whole being. The film's lack of such signature Hendrix tunes as "Purple Haze" may put off some—the filmmakers couldn't get the rights—but I'd argue that this obstacle forced Ridley to zig where most biopics zag. Which, when you think about it, is fitting for the story of a lefty who played his guitar upside down. **B+**


André Benjamin

Denzel Washington and Chloë Grace Moretz

The Equalizer

STARRING *Denzel Washington, Chloë Grace Moretz*
DIRECTED BY *Antoine Fuqua*
R, 2 HRS., 12 MINS.
By Joe McGovern

Revenge is a topic awash in moral ambiguity. Particularly since 9/11 and the rise of sanctioned torture methods like waterboarding, dozens of projects—from *Dexter* to *Zero Dark Thirty*—have provoked quarreling over the vital questions: What price do the guilty pay? And what price do we? *The Equalizer*, starring Denzel Washington as a modern-day avenging angel, lives in a world where such conversations don't exist. Director Antoine Fuqua (*Training Day*) and writer Richard Wenk (*The Expendables 2*) have taken the outline of a 1980s CBS show and turned it into one long and loathsome bore of a movie. The plot has been gerrymandered so that we sympathize with the protagonist's plight no matter how many goons he gores through the chin with a corkscrew. But make no mistake: It's as challenging as slaughterhouse footage—and about as watchable.

As the ex–CIA operative Bob, now demoted to cutting wood at a Home Mart, Washington can't suppress his natural gravitas even though the role is meant for a dweebier actor. He takes a paternal shine to a Russian prostitute (Chloë Grace Moretz), and after her pimp puts her in the hospital, Bob butchers an entire crime syndicate. The material cries for a twist of irony, but Fuqua stages the bloodshed with dead seriousness. When the main evildoer (Marton Csokas) chokes a call girl, a music box chimes. The gloom doesn't even clear with cameo appearances by Melissa Leo, donning the pantsuit she always wears for studio movies, and Bill Pullman, who seems to be auditioning for the Mitt Romney role in a sequel to *Game Change*. We're treated to one thug after another running into Bob's buzz saw—carnage made literal in the movie's hardware-store-set finale. It's the sign of an empty, depressing experience when the only tension is over Bob's choice to use a power drill or a weed whacker for his next kill. **D**

THE EQUALIZER: SCOTT GARFIELD; *JIMI: ALL IS BY MY SIDE*: PATRICK REDMOND

Viggo Mortensen and Kirsten Dunst in *The Two Faces of January*

Also Playing

20,000 Days on Earth

NR, 1 HR., 37 MINS.

Nick Cave, the dark master of the murder ballad and baddest of the Bad Seeds, opens up about love and death, heaven and hell, and the ins and outs of his creative process in Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard's hypnotic quasi-documentary. Dashing as ever in slim bespoke suits that make him look like the world's nattiest undertaker, Cave is a charmingly introspective tour guide, letting us sit in on sessions with a shrink and chats with old pals (actor Ray Winstone, pop diva Kylie Minogue, etc.). An intelligent and revealing look at one of rock's last true iconoclasts. **A–** —*Chris Nashawaty*

20,000 Days on Earth's Nick Cave

The Boxtrolls

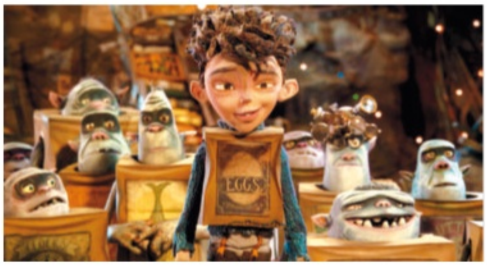
PG, 1 HR., 36 MINS.

In this stop-motion kids' flick, gremlins that wear cardboard boxes like turtle shells emerge at night to Dumpster-dive. The script lacks the wit of *Wallace & Gromit*—even the trolls groan at a giant cheese named the Briehemoth—and never sinks its teeth into the twisted fantasy of its premise. But voicing the putrid villain Archibald Snatcher (who's modeled as either a tribute or an insult to actor Timothy Spall), Ben Kingsley gives the funniest performance of his career. **B–** —*Joe McGovern*

Pride

R, 1 HR., 57 MINS.

The true story of a bond between the mining and gay communities, both choked by the iron fist of Margaret Thatcher in 1984 England, *Pride* is a working-class comedy that presses so hard on the feel-good sweet spots that it almost leaves bruises. Director Matthew Warchus unstiffens the clichés by shooting in a bright, musical style, and gets poignant work from his ensemble of newcomers and old pros, especially Paddy Considine, Imelda Staunton, and Bill Nighy. Despite its precariously enlarged heart, the film is a well-calculated piece of political theater. **B** —*Joe McGovern*



The Boxtrolls

The Two Faces of January

PG-13, 1 HR., 37 MINS.

No one stirred a cocktail of decadence and danger quite like Patricia Highsmith. But this stylish slow-burn Euro-thriller pales next to such previous Highsmith adaptations as *The Talented Mr. Ripley*. Viggo Mortensen and Kirsten Dunst are a wealthy American couple vacationing in 1962 Greece who befriend a scamming expat (Oscar Isaac) who may be out to fleece them. Writer-director Hossein Amini uses murder, seduction, and betrayal to set a spring trap that never quite springs. But it sure looks swell. *(Also on iTunes and VOD)* **B–** —*Chris Nashawaty*

Two Night Stand

R, 1 HR., 26 MINS.

In this decidedly unsophisticated chamber comedy, a self-described mess of a single gal (Analeigh Tipton) experiences an over-extended wham-bam with a laid-back dude (Miles Teller) during the worst blizzard in NYC history. Teller's and Tipton's natural charisma carries the film much further than it deserves to go, which is nowhere fast. The story's built-in limitations are a bore. Truly: Unclogging a toilet occupies about a third of the running time, and without inspiring a single laugh. Judd Apatow & Co., you can sleep easy. *(Also on iTunes and VOD)* **C** —*Jason Clark*

THE TWO FACES OF JANUARY: JACK ENGLISH; THE BOXTROLLS: LAIKA

Viola Davis

How to Get Away With Murder

Thursdays, 10 p.m.

ABC

By Melissa Maerz

DISCREDIT THE witness. Find a new suspect. Bury the evidence. These are the rules that criminal-law professor Annalise Keating (Viola Davis) tells her students to follow if they want to win a case. Of course, they're the same rules that Pete Nowalk (*Grey's Anatomy*) used to create the most addictive new thriller on TV. Executive-produced by Shonda Rhimes, *How to Get Away With Murder* begins with an actual murder—a group of hypercompetitive law students are fighting over what to do with the body—before it flashes back to their first day in Keating's class, quickly establishing each character before discrediting our first impressions. Wes (Alfred Enoch) is a transfer student, unprepared for this cutthroat program. Michaela (Aja Naomi King) and Asher (Matt McGorry) are the class know-it-alls. Pretty boy Connor (Jack Falahee) is a master manipulator who trades sex for evidence. Laurel (Karla Souza) is the smart, quiet one. *Or is she?* As Keating asks during one lecture on witnesses, "Do you know who anyone *really* is?"

Thanks to Davis' powerfully layered performance, it's impossible to read Keating. When Wes finds her cheating on her husband, she lays a hand on Wes' chest, tearfully confessing that she's having trouble conceiving. Later, she gives him special treatment in class. Is she flirting? Blackmailing him? Just acting motherly, because she sees potential in him that we don't? Or are those all loaded questions? When someone quips that Wes could be Keating's son, Michaela scoffs, "Because all black people are related?" *Murder* wants us to reevaluate our assumptions about people, and because it's a show about a brilliant, complicated woman of color, that's especially important. Consider that *The New York Times*' review of *Murder* began with the ridiculous suggestion that Rhimes' autobiography should be called *How to Get Away With Being an Angry Black Woman*. Clearly everyone needs a chance to reevaluate their first impressions.

But hey, we're getting way too serious here. The show's writers might be able to use *mens rea* correctly in a sentence, but *Murder* is supposed to be fun. It builds suspense with long, silent stares that intimate everyone's guilty of something: murder (did Keating's husband kill a sorority girl?), adultery (did her associate sleep with her husband?), or just inadvisable piercings (hello, Wes' goth neighbor!). The bitchy dialogue is endlessly quotable: "I look nice, I know," says associate Bonnie (Liza Weil). "But that's just my face." And the masterfully dangled clues hint at new suspects every week. Maybe Nowalk (and Rhimes) knows something the professor doesn't: Yes, bury the evidence. But don't bury it too deep. **A**

Jack Falahee (center)

BREAKING BIG

Alfred Enoch

Meet the charming 25-year-old Brit who plays one of the star pupils on *How to Get Away With Murder*. Just don't expect him to give away any of the show's secrets. —TIM STACK

Despite a résumé that includes theatrical productions of *Coriolanus* and *Antigone* as well as guest spots on *Sherlock* and *Broadchurch*, Alfred Enoch didn't think he had a chance of getting cast on ABC's *How to Get Away With Murder*—based solely on his location. "We have this expression in the U.K., 'Coals to Newcastle,'" says the London native, referring to the pointlessness of carrying coal to a big mining town. "So it's like, 'What's the need of taking actors to America?' I guess I got lucky and they liked what I did." Previously best known as Hogwarts student Dean Thomas in the Harry Potter movies, Enoch—whose father, William Russell, was one of the original cast members of *Doctor Who*—auditioned via Skype with *Murder* creator Pete Nowalk, winning the pivotal role of Wes, a seemingly naive law student who gets tangled up in a murder and with his enigmatic professor Annalise Keating (Viola Davis).

Enoch says he doesn't know who committed the aforementioned killing; the actors often learn the show's big twists when they eyeball the script for the first time. "There is that excitement of 'What the hell happens next?'" he says. "It brings its challenges, but I understand they're still writing and putting it together." Being part of a supersecret project is not an entirely unfamiliar feeling, though. "It's a similar thing in a way with the excitement I had as a kid doing Potter: Every time a new book came out, I wanted to know because I loved the books. And then I wanted to know what happened to my character."

HOW TO GET AWAY WITH MURDER: MITCH HAASETH/ABC (2); ENOCH: CRAIG SJODIN/ABC

The Good, the Bad, and

With a slew of comic-book characters heading to the small screen, we offer up a cheat sheet on the season's heroes (and one

BARRY ALLEN

THE FLASH THE CW

COMICS BACKSTORY A lightning bolt strikes a shelf of chemicals, dousing the forensic scientist and turning him into the Flash.

TV TURN Introduced on *Arrow*, Barry (Grant Gustin) grew up obsessed with the unknown after his mother was killed by a mysterious flash of light. "What really drives him, as much as finding his mother's killer and freeing his father from prison, is not wanting anyone to suffer the way he did," exec producer Andrew Kreisberg says. Barry's determined to use his powers for good—which means he can be selfless to a fault.

RECOMMENDED READING Kreisberg suggests anything from DC Entertainment's Geoff Johns, including *Rebirth*, *Flashpoint*, and *Rogues*.

PEGGY CARTER

MARVEL'S AGENT CARTER ABC

COMICS BACKSTORY Peggy (Hayley Atwell) was a WWII freedom fighter before becoming one of Captain America's love interests.

TV TURN "We pick up with her in 1946, it's postwar, and the world has changed," exec producer Tara Butters says of the midseason series. "One of the themes is, How does someone so capable and so well respected deal with the changes of her position in her job and in her personal life?" Certainly not by becoming a damsel in distress. "Her superpower is the fact that people underestimate her," says exec producer Michele Fazekas.

RECOMMENDED READING Much like the movies, Carter derives from the Ed Brubaker run of *Captain America*.

JOHN CONSTANTINE

CONSTANTINE NBC

COMICS BACKSTORY The con man–turned–occult detective begrudgingly keeps dark forces at bay.

TV TURN *Constantine* is adapted directly from *Hellblazer*, meaning the pragmatic antihero (Matt Ryan) is a terrible role model. "He still drinks too much and—within the framework of FCC limitations—he still smokes and curses," exec producer David S. Goyer says. In short, Constantine is far from a spandex-clad hero. "Our roots are much more in horror, the supernatural, and *The Exorcist*."

RECOMMENDED READING Goyer says Alan Moore's "American Gothic" arc from *Swamp Thing* and Jamie Delano's initial *Hellblazer* run are a great place to start.

MOCKINGBIRD

MARVEL'S AGENTS OF S.H.I.E.L.D. ABC

COMICS BACKSTORY Barbara "Bobbi" Morse (a.k.a. Mockingbird) is an agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. who looks to expose corruption within the agency.

TV TURN *S.H.I.E.L.D.*'s version will keep in line with the comics—with Bobbi (Adrianne Palicki) portrayed as an intelligent and very competent superspy. Producers do promise a little twist on the character (though they're loath to spill details). So will she be friend or foe to Director Coulson? "When she comes in, it's not necessarily what you'd expect," EP Jed Whedon hints.

RECOMMENDED READING Though mum on which arcs inspired them, producers cite Jim McCann's *Hawkeye & Mockingbird* miniseries as a fave.

GUSTIN: BRENDAN MEADOWS/THE CW; ATWELL, PALICKI: KELSEY MCNEAL/ABC (2); RYAN: QUANTRELL COLBERT/NBC; THE FLASH, CONSTANTINE: DC ENTERTAINMENT (2); PEGGY CARTER, MOCKINGBIRD: MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT (2)

the Undead

very big bad). —**NATALIE ABRAMS**

OLIVIA "LIV" MOORE

iZOMBIE THE CW

COMICS BACKSTORY Grave-digging zombie Gwen Dylan eats brains to maintain a semblance of her humanity.

TV TURN After being caught in a zombie attack, former med student Liv (Rose McIver) takes a job at the coroner's office to gain access to gray matter. But in eating parts of the corpses, "Liv gets some of their abilities, proclivities, and also some of their memories," EP Diane Ruggiero-Wright says. She uses those memories to help solve murders.

RECOMMENDED READING Chris Roberson penned the 28-issue *iZombie* that loosely inspires the show—though you won't see any were-terriers on the CW series (which debuts midseason).

RA'S AL GHUL

ARROW THE CW

COMICS BACKSTORY Batman's greatest foe seeks to bring peace by eliminating most of the world's population.

TV TURN The show hews closely to the comics' portrayal (though this marks his first major arc with Arrow). Even more dastardly than baddies Merlyn and Deathstroke, Ra's al Ghul (who will be played by Matt Nable) "has people who have sworn their lives to him," EP Kreisberg says. "It's a lot more of a threat and a lot greater of an enemy to overcome when people are willing to fight and die for their cause."

RECOMMENDED READING "There's one book in particular, but if I said it, I'd be ruining a lot of the season," Kreisberg teases. You can learn about the origins of Ra's in Dennis O'Neil's *Batman: Birth of the Demon*.

MCIVER: CATE CAMERON/THE CW; NABLE: DON ARNOLD/WIREIMAGE.COM; IZOMBIE, RA'S AL GHUL: DC ENTERTAINMENT (2); *GRACEPOINT*: ED ARAQUEL/FOX

Anna Gunn and David Tennant

Gracepoint

Debuts Oct. 2, 9 p.m.

FOX

By Jeff Jensen

A murdered child. Mismatched detectives. A dreary small town where everyone has a big secret. You've seen *Gracepoint* before, in various permutations (*Twin Peaks*, *The Killing*) and possibly in the form of the show from which it has been all but xeroxed: I'm told this Fox "mystery event"—a broadcast-TV bid to get into the anthology biz (*True Detective*, *Fargo*)—is often a shot-for-shot replica of the 2013 British smash *Broadchurch*. In fact, the star of the ITV series, David Tennant, plays the same redemption-starved scruffy-faced a--hole cop here, but with an American accent. I never watched the acclaimed *Broadchurch*, but after five episodes of *Gracepoint*, I wonder: What's the big deal?

Not that *Gracepoint* is bad. This solidly plotted, drily observed whodunit starts strong, holding your interest with the discovery of one secret after another, and shows cynical regard for innocence in all senses of the term: In the seaside town of Gracepoint, the kids aren't all right, and the parents ain't much better. And yet the episodes after the pilot vibe bland thanks to familiar archetypes that are serviceably played. The grief-stricken mom. The angry, adulterous father. The suspect priest. The heartless journalist. Nick Nolte—his metamorphosis into a literal salty dog almost complete—amuses in fleeting appearances with his gravel-voiced raging. I appreciate Anna Gunn's portrayal of a cop who won't apologize for feeling feelings and wanting respect. But Tennant is more pissy than pained, a cliché of the brooding, bad-mannered dick with a bum ticker. *Gracepoint* is good enough to keep you guessing, but not good enough to keep you from shrugging. **B–**

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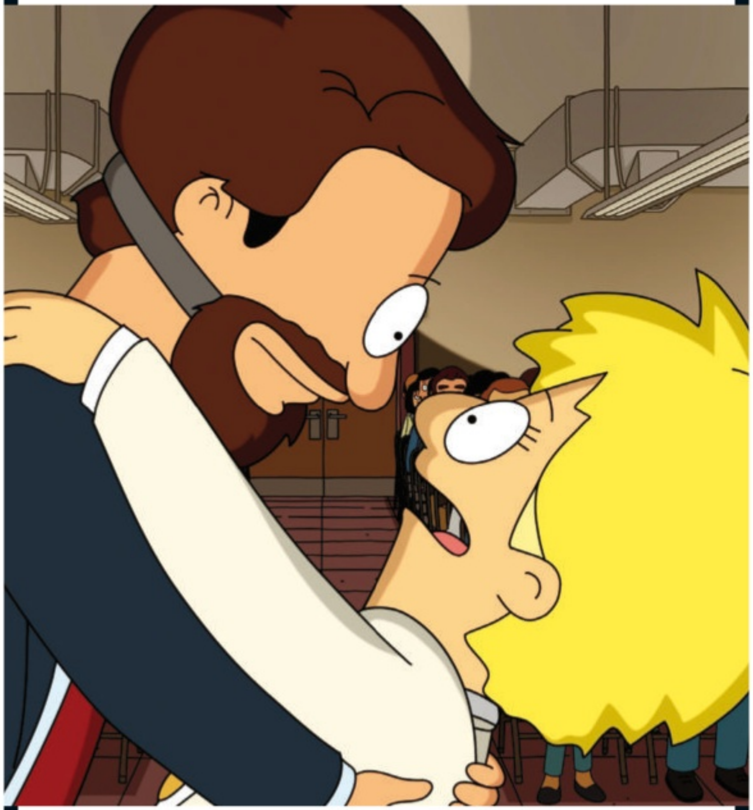
What to Watch

A DAY-TO-DAY GUIDE TO NOTABLE PROGRAMS*

By Clark Collis

MUST WATCH OF THE WEEK

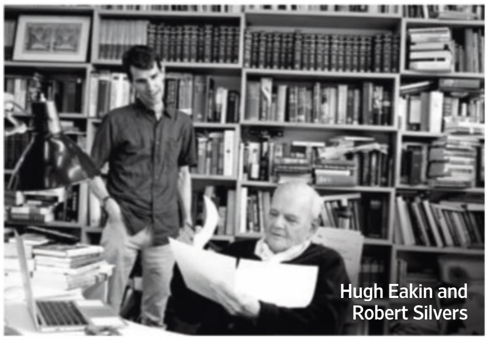


Bob's Burgers

SUNDAY, OCT. 5 | 7:30–8PM | FOX

SEASON PREMIERE The perennially undervalued animated sitcom returns with an episode that finds the younger members of the Belcher clan exchanging the stench of fried meat for the smell of greasepaint. When the high school decides to stage a musical version of *Working Girl* (sample lyric: "The only thing bigger than my hair/Is my heart!"), Louise persuades Gene to put on a "guerrilla-slash-protest" production of his self-penned *Die Hard: The Musical* (sample lyric: "Nakatomi-Nakatomi-Nakatomi-Nakatomi-Nakatomi..."). As usual, the jokes come fast and land hard, and the musical numbers are deliberately, deliriously awful. Then again, it could be argued that the climactic sequence, in which the two shows are combined, is actually an improvement over many tunes from some of the big-screen-to-Broadway transplants of the past few years. **B+**

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 29



Hugh Eakin and Robert Silvers

9–10:45PM
The 50 Year Argument
HBO

Codirected by Martin Scorsese, *The 50 Year Argument* details the history and impact of *The New York Review of Books*, a magazine whose political and cultural influence has been far greater than its name might indicate. If the result is less rock & roll, both literally and metaphorically, than the director's films about the Band and Bob Dylan, it features an impressive list of interviewees, including Joan Didion and Michael Chabon. It's also worth seeing just for the vintage footage of Norman Mailer and Gore Vidal verbally squaring off on *The Dick Cavett Show*. **B+**

SEASON PREMIERE
10–11PM
Castle
ABC

Did Castle survive that vehicular unpleasantness at the end of last season? We have no inside info—but we can't help noticing they haven't changed the title to *Beckett*.

10–11PM
The Blacklist
NBC

Red decides it's time to take down an untrustworthy bank. "Oh, no!" says everybody. *Sarcastically!*

SEASON PREMIERE
10–11PM
NCIS: Los Angeles
CBS

Callen and Sam are trapped in an armed submarine. But really, aren't we all?

Allison Janney and Anna Faris

SEASON PREMIERE
8:30–9PM
Mom
CBS

Allison Janney won an Emmy for this, so it must be good...right? Mostly. In the first one back, titled "Hepatitis and Lemon Zest," Christy (the always great Anna Faris) succumbs to the lure of gambling, and things quickly get dire. As the title suggests, the story is a little sweet, a little uncomfortable, and very Chuck Lorre. **B+** —*Ray Rahman*

BOB'S BURGERS: FOX; *THE 50 YEAR ARGUMENT*: BRIGITTE LACOMBE/HBO; *MOM*: SONJA FLEMMING/CBS

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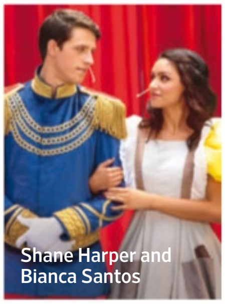
*TIMES ARE EASTERN DAYLIGHT AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 30


Shane Harper and Bianca Santos

SERIES DEBUT
11–11:30PM
Happyland
MTV

As far as teen dramedies about possibly incestuous hookups among theme-park employees go, *Happyland* is probably the best one. It's sassy and smart, but there's a dark acuity to the humor that fits in with MTV's recent edgy efforts like *Awkward*. (Don't worry—there's still eye candy aplenty.) **B+** —*Marc Snetiker*

9–9:30PM
New Girl
Fox

Jess' father (Rob Reiner) arrives with his girlfriend (Kaitlin Olson from *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*). Yep, now you're going to have the image of those two making out in your brain all day.

SERIES DEBUT
10–11PM
Manhattan Love Story
ABC

Like pornography and the drug testing of Soviet-era Eastern European athletes, this sitcom will expose the differences between men and women.

10:01–11PM
Person of Interest
CBS

In an episode we're going to pretend is an *Amazing Race* crossover, Finch learns the latest Person of Interest is involved in a life-and-death scavenger hunt.

John Cho and Karen Gillan

8–8:30PM
Selfie
ABC

SERIES DEBUT

This spin on *Pygmalion* centers on Eliza Dooley (onetime *Doctor Who* companion Karen Gillan), a social-media-obsessed sales rep whose self-absorption masks a kind heart. Likewise, it seems that there could be a decent show trapped within *Selfie*; Gillan and her haughty Henry Higgins, John Cho, have nice chemistry, and creator Emily Kapnek boasts an enviable comedy résumé (*Parks and Recreation*, *Suburgatory*). Too bad the show's cruel sense of humor and reliance on instantly dated references ("Make like Elsa and let it go") may very well drive away viewers before they can see what *Selfie* and Eliza become. **C** —*Hillary Busis*

WED OCT 1

SEASON PREMIERE
9–10PM
Criminal Minds
CBS

I know what show Jennifer Love Hewitt joined last summer! (Note for younger readers: Jennifer Love Hewitt once appeared in a film called *I Know What You Did Last Summer*.)

9–10PM
Law & Order: SVU
NBC

A sports star is accused of a serious crime. *Shocker.*

Let's Stalk

SERIES DEBUT
10–11PM
Stalker
CBS

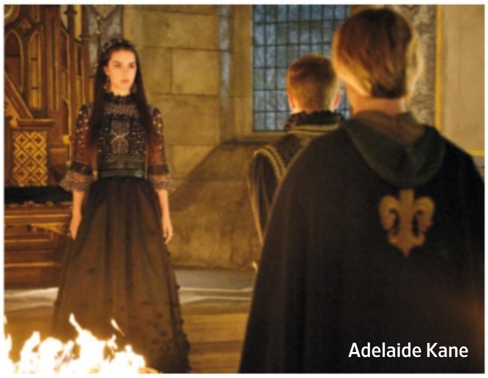
How many stalkers does Dermot Mulroney stalk on this cop show? None. It's Dylan McDermott!!!

THURSDAY OCTOBER 2

9–10PM
Reign
The CW

SEASON PREMIERE

In 16th-century France, there's one problem no queen can prepare for: the plague. But with a castle on lockdown and King Francis (Toby Regbo) having ventured out to save his bastard child, new queen Mary (Adelaide Kane) has no choice. With former monarch Catherine (Megan Follows) by her side, she is introduced to the "real France," which has less to do with the young love that drove season 1 and more to do with disease, politics, and murderous nobles. Yet Mary rises to the occasion, ruling with (sometimes deadly) determination. Sadly, Francis' adventure in the woods isn't half as interesting as the disease within the castle's walls. **B** —*Samantha Highfill*


Adelaide Kane

SEASON PREMIERE
8–9PM
The Vampire Diaries
The CW

Elena has spent the past four months coping with the loss of Damon in an unconventional and potentially dangerous way. Competitive hot-dog eating?

SERIES DEBUT
9–9:30PM
Bad Judge
NBC

Kate Walsh plays a hot judge with a reputation for unorthodox behavior and no desire to settle down. That's right, it's basically the Antonin Scalia story.

SERIES DEBUT
9:30–10PM
A to Z
NBC

Meanwhile, this new sitcom asks, "Can Ginsberg from *Mad Men* successfully woo The Mother from *How I Met Your Mother*?" Answer: not if *S* stands for "self-administered nipple removal."

FRIDAY OCTOBER 3

Jeff Davis, Dan Harmon, and Erin McGathy

STREAMING
Harmontown
On demand

In 2012, *Community* creator Dan Harmon was fired from his own show by NBC. The following year, he decided to take his podcast Harmontown on tour, accompanied by his girlfriend Erin McGathy, foils Jeff Davis and "Dungeon Master" Spencer Crittenden, and a film crew. The resulting movie (also in limited theatrical release) brilliantly captures the boozy Harmon at his hilarious best and, self-admittedly, "villain"-ish worst, while also featuring talking-head contributions from former collaborators such as Jack Black and Ben Stiller. The highest compliment I can pay is that, as good as *Community* was after Harmon's return last season, you almost want him to get fired again so there can be a sequel. **A–**

HAPPYLAND: MTV; *SELFIE*: ERIC MCCANDLESS/ABC; *STALKER*: ROBERT VOETS/CBS; *REIGN*: BEN MARK HOLZBERG/THE CW; *HARMONTOWN*: RYAN CARMODY

SATURDAY OCTOBER 4

SEASON PREMIERE
9–10PM*
Austin City Limits
PBS
Beck sings—or hands out chunks of artisanal cheese inscribed with musical notations. Who knows with that guy?

*check local listings

9–10PM
Doctor Who
BBC America
This is called "Kill the Moon," so any character with that surname should be doubly careful.

9–11PM
Dark Haul
Syfy
Tom Sizemore stars in this tale of a creature that could destroy the world. Just like in *Species*!

11:30PM–1AM
Saturday Night Live
NBC
Emmy winner Sarah Silverman hosts. Lottery-of-life winner Adam Levine performs with Maroon 5.

Jessie T. Usher

SERIES DEBUT
9–9:30PM
Survivor's Remorse
Starz
The basketball drama follows rookie Cam Calloway (Jessie T. Usher), who just signed a multimillion-dollar deal and wants to give back to the old neighborhood. The cast is charming, and there's a refreshing honesty about Cam. "Thank you for not aborting me," he tells his mom at a press conference. "That would've sucked." **B+** —*Melissa Maerz*

SUNDAY OCTOBER 5

SEASON PREMIERE
9–11PM
Homeland
Showtime
Carrie makes a crucial decision, and Saul tries to adjust to life in the private sector. If you're an occasional viewer wondering what's up with Brody, I have some bad news...

10–11PM
CSI
CBS
The team looks into a robbery and fatal shooting at a medical-marijuana store. Well, that's not cool, man.

Fangs for the Memories

SEASON FINALE
10–11PM
The Strain
FX
Eph and Fet prepare for an all-out assault on the Master. Remember to stretch!

Martin Short and John Mulaney

9:30–10PM
Mulaney
Fox
Former *SNL* writer John Mulaney's sitcom is neither the new *Seinfeld* NBC hoped it would be when they greenlit the original pilot nor the disastrous nonstarter a lot of people assumed it was after NBC passed. Even in the rough world of comedy debuts, the premiere is weak, mostly because it has to unpack its too-busy premise: Mulaney plays a struggling stand-up with a pair of roommates (Seaton Smith and Nasim Pedrad) and a new job scribbling jokes for game-show host Lou Cannon (Martin Short). But by its third episode, the show is confident enough to make you think it might, as *Seinfeld* did, survive its rocky start. **C+** —*Kyle Anderson*

SURVIVOR'S REMORSE: STARZ ENTERTAINMENT; *THE STRAIN*: FX; *MULANEY*: RAY MICKSHAW/FOX

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Music

Tony Bennett & Lady Gaga

Cheek to Cheek
TRADITIONAL POP
(COLUMBIA)

By Adam Markovitz

THIS IS A JOKE, right? Lady Gaga and Tony Bennett making an album together? First of all, they have absolutely nothing in common: She's the postmodern star who was born for TV; he's the postwar crooner who was born the year TV was invented. (No kidding, 1926.) Besides, Gaga never takes anything seriously. This is a woman who once looked at a sirloin and thought, "I have *just* the shoes..."

And yet, when Gaga, 28, and Bennett, 88, are out together dancing on *Cheek to Cheek*, they're in—if not quite heaven, then at least a pretty swell piano bar. Fronting a live band, the singers have a ball with standards from Cole Porter's "Anything Goes" to the Gershwins' "They All Laughed." It's traditional pop without gimmicks or Gaga-isms, just Anthony Benedetto (his real name) and Stefani Germanotta (hers) on a happy stroll down their beloved Tin Pan Alley.

The track list is, admittedly, a little dull. Luckily, the singing isn't. Bennett's voice is the leather armchair of American song: classy, sturdy, and still sigh-inducingly comfy, even though it's been around longer than anyone can remember. Gaga tickles his mischief; he, in turn, lifts her technique. She's done brassy before, but the revelation here is when she turns woodwind, delicately toying with tone and phrasing like a pro on "Nature Boy" and "Lush Life."

Why the pair wanted to make this album—for laughs, as a stunt—we may never know. But if you come to *Cheek to Cheek* expecting a half-assed gag, the joke's on you. **B+**

BEST TRACKS

EV'RY TIME WE SAY GOODBYE
Gaga does Ella (or at least Liza)

CHEEK TO CHEEK
A swingy spritzer

STEVEN KLEIN (2)

ALSO AVAILABLE

SINGLES

MEGHAN TRAINOR
"DEAR FUTURE HUSBAND"
She got the world talking "All About That Bass," but now Trainor has some doo-wop marching orders for an audience of one: Mr. Right. He'd better treat her like a lady, buy her flowers, and apologize after fights, "even if I was wrong/You know I'm never wrong." If she keeps making kitschy sock-hop throwbacks this irresistible, how could he not? **A–** —*Adam Markovitz*

IMAGINE DRAGONS
"WARRIORS"
This blast of digital stadium rock wouldn't sound out of place scoring an epic videogame—which it actually does: Imagine Dragons crafted it for the hit game *League of Legends*. Though it's mildly concerning that such a young band already has a boilerplate, "Warriors" chest-thumps better than anything on that U2 record you still haven't figured out how to delete from your iTunes. **B** —*Kyle Anderson*

ALBUMS

APHEX TWIN *Syro*
Thirteen years after his last release—the abstract, obtuse *Drukqs*—electronic music's favorite madman returns with a startlingly accessible, possibly even pop-friendly effort. Who knows, the whole thing may turn out to be an elaborate conceptual prank in Richard D. James' mind, but when it's this amazing to dance to, it hardly matters. **A** —*Miles Raymer*

LENNY KRAVITZ *Strut*
Filmmaker Brian De Palma cribs most of his moves from Hitchcock, but he does it with such gusto that you can't help but admire the work. That's Lenny Kravitz: Ten albums in, his lustful embrace of Prince guitar jams and Sly Stone jungle funk—highlighted by *Strut*'s sweaty disco hybrid "The Chamber"—makes his lack of originality and occasional corniness eminently forgivable. **B+** —*Kyle Anderson*

ALT-J *This Is All Yours*
The British trio have built a fervent following by combining fringy sounds with unabashedly poppy hooks, like three early-career Becks reincarnated as Miley Cyrus fans. The band has upped its sonic ambition on the follow-up to its Mercury Prize-winning debut, but the plethora of headphone-friendly tones frequently overshadow melodies that feel less than fully developed. **B–** —*Miles Raymer*

PERFUME GENIUS *Too Bright*
"No family is safe/When I sashay," Mike Hadreas, a.k.a. Perfume Genius, sings with a sneer on "Queen." The song, like the rest of his third album, is hypnotic, sublime, scary pop music—catchy enough for a teen-movie soundtrack, weird enough to employ the word *sashay* as a threat. *Too Bright* feels like his strongest statement yet, and his loveliest: On the title track, a vulnerable choral ballad, delicate pianos and airy vocals mingle winsomely, while "Grid" plays like an art-damaged rock & roll nightmare. Even the moments between the standouts float by with a strange beauty. Don't miss them. **A–** —*Ray Rahman*

JOHN MELLENCAMP *Plain Spoken*
On his past two albums, Mellencamp leaned heavily on producer T Bone Burnett to guide his transformation into a strummy folk warbler. His self-produced 22nd release is less fussily arranged, which lets *Plain*'s simple tunes unfold breezily and organically. He's not a Dylan- or Springsteen-level poet, but his commitment to melody galvanizes "Sometimes There's God" and "The Courtesy of Kings," two sweet, shaggy campfire jams. **B** —*Kyle Anderson*

Lenny Kravitz

WHO'S PLAYING
ON LATE-NIGHT & TALK SHOWS

SATURDAY SEPT 27

Saturday Night Live
ARIANA GRANDE

MONDAY SEPT 29

Jimmy Kimmel Live!
CLEAN BANDIT

Live With Kelly and Michael
BRYAN ADAMS

Late Show With David Letterman
ARETHA FRANKLIN

TUESDAY SEPT 30

The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
LUCINDA WILLIAMS WITH THE ROOTS

Late Show With David Letterman
BLEACHERS

The Ellen DeGeneres Show
RYAN ADAMS

WEDNESDAY OCT 1

The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
LADY ANTEBELLUM

The Ellen DeGeneres Show
JASON ALDEAN

THURSDAY OCT 2

Live With Kelly and Michael
BLAKE SHELTON

Jimmy Kimmel Live!
DISCLOSURE FEAT. MARY J. BLIGE

The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
5 SECONDS OF SUMMER

FRIDAY OCT 3

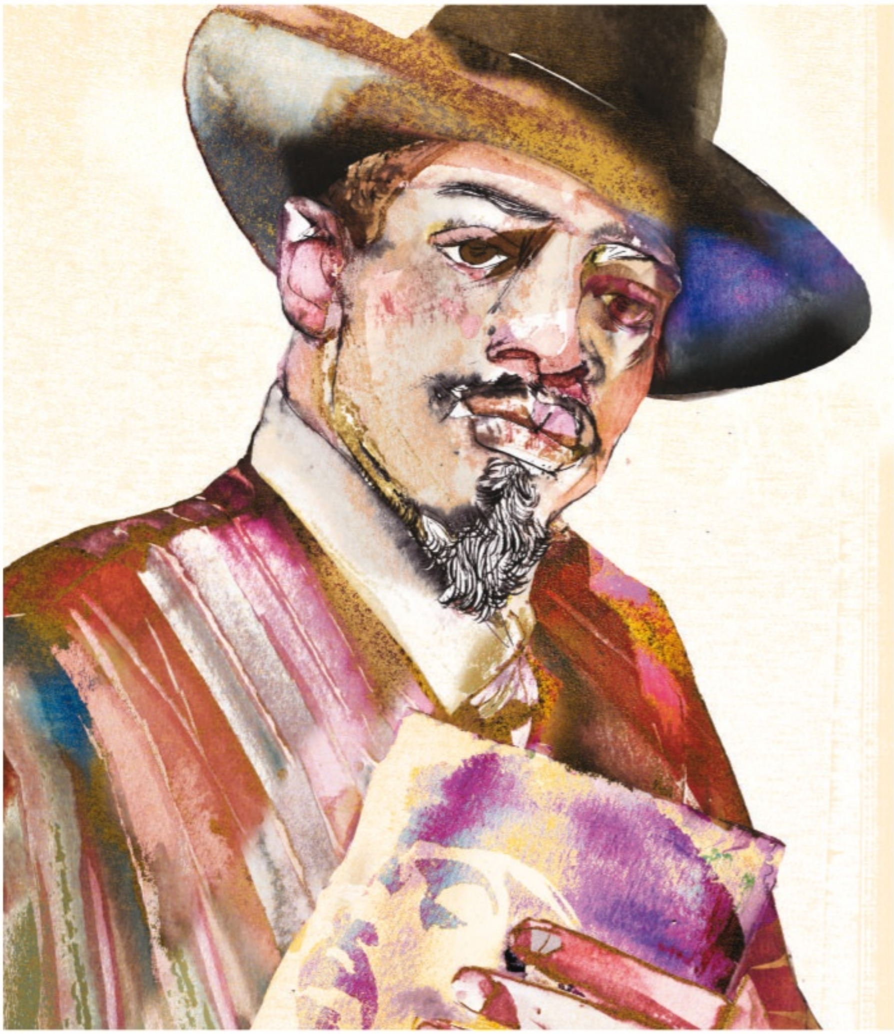
Late Show With David Letterman
KANDACE SPRINGS

TRAINOR: EPIC RECORDS; PERFUME GENIUS: ANDREW BENGE/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES; KRAVITZ: DENISE TRUSCELLO/GETTY IMAGES; GRANDE: JASON MERRITT/MTV/GETTY IMAGES; FRANKLIN: LARRY FRENCH/BET/GETTY IMAGES; SHELTON: C FLANIGAN/FILMMAGIC.COM

Andre 3000 Says He's Not An Actor. *Jimi* Proves He Is.

It took the rapper 15 years to get a Jimi Hendrix movie to the big screen, and nearly half as long to return to OutKast. He talks to EW about the role of a lifetime—and what comes after. —KYLE ANDERSON

The André Benjamin drought is over. After a long break from the spotlight, the man also known as Andre 3000 not only launched a headline-making reunion tour with his formative rap duo this summer but also stars in the excellent Hendrix biopic *Jimi: All Is by My Side*, written and directed by Oscar-winning *12 Years a Slave* screenwriter John Ridley (see review, page 58). Thoughtful and forthcoming, Benjamin, 39, spoke via phone from his home in Atlanta about the evolution of *Jimi* and the work it takes to be true to the parts he plays both on stage and off.



What drew you to playing this role on film?
John Ridley's take on it. I've been attached to a few different Hendrix projects over the years. I'd read four or five different scripts—great scripts at that—but for some reason or another they just didn't get made. When John came to me with this one, I was like, "Wow, I'm pretty old at this point..." And the first thing he said was "I'm going to make this movie, and I want you to be in it." I was just going off his energy.

How did your interpretation of Hendrix change from those early days?
If I had made this 15 years ago, it wouldn't have been the same movie. I was young at the time, and I think I was just giddy about the sensationalized Hendrix—the wild man on stage. I would have played him as this super-high, stoned-out character. But I think doing this movie took a certain maturity, because Hendrix was a complex individual. Fifteen years ago [OutKast] were new artists on the rise, and now when you look back at how people looked at you and the pedestal they put you on, you realize that, man, when you're in it, you don't know that you're going to be held up as a rock god. Hendrix didn't know it. He was just being himself, so I was trying to find the human

Illustration by RICCARDO VECCHIO

part of him. I know what it is being a little timid on stage at first and finding your actual voice. Then once the lights go down and you're back in your hotel room, it's different. So I wanted to make sure we brought that out.

The movie goes to some pretty dark places. How did you tap into that?
I think when we try to take these idols and whitewash what's going on, we take away a lot of them. It's important that we show that. I was reading one interview where he said, "I clearly know I've taken too many drugs. I used to think I was *made* for these drugs." Young guitarists might think, "I'll just get high and get up on stage and do whatever," but people gotta realize that he was already a great guitarist before he got high.

What do you get from making movies that you don't get from music?
Constraints. When I'm doing my own music, I'm thinking of my own stories, I'm coming up with the visuals, I'm creating my own concepts. It's all coming from one brain. But when you're attached to a movie, you're riding with a hundred-plus people. You're lending a service, just getting in and helping out. So signing myself on was like getting my first job since I was 17 or 18. It's refreshing; it kind of grounds you. And believe it or not, when you're an entertainer you don't really have a life. It's hard for me to go out in public and be normal. So it's fun to play that on screen.

Did the experience of this role bleed into the OutKast reunion tour at all?
No, because we shot it about two years ago. But I can tell you, it was weird when I had to do the performances as Hendrix. They would bring in locals to be in the crowd scenes, and people knew they were extras in a Hendrix movie, but they were coming to see Andre 3000 perform. You're in costume, in character, wearing these tight-ass '60s pants and these boots, and in between takes, somebody in the crowd would be [yelling my nickname] "Stacks! Three Stacks!" But I'm glad I got the experience, even though about halfway through I was thinking, "Man, why did I think I could do this? Who plays Hendrix? He's too cool for *everybody*."

"I HAD TO UNDERSTAND WHAT PART OF HENDRIX I WANTED TO PLAY. I COULD HAVE EASILY JUST DONE THE WHOLE 'WILD MAN' THING."

***By My Side* covers only a year of Hendrix's life. Is it a role you'd revisit?**
Never say never, but I don't think I could. It was so much to go through that ride. Even now, friends ask me to do the voice, and it's just so much to go back to that time and remember and shape my mouth and my voice to do it. I want to keep it moving. I like the newness of things. It's kind of weird looking at myself on screen. I honestly don't think I'm an actor in that way. I've had opportunities that have worked out for me because I've been in OutKast. But I think there should be a lot of Hendrix movies, man. I think Kid Cudi should play Hendrix, and Wiz Khalifa. I've never seen him act, but he's skinny enough. [*Laughs*]

Would you do more with OutKast, now that the tour is almost done?
I'm kind of floating right now. I don't know which direction I'm going. I feel in a weird space, because this is, like, my second part of life. With OutKast, those were all my high school dreams, and we did that. So now I gotta figure out what I'm passionate about and what I can put my time into and be honest about. The older you get, you have to be more honest about what you're doing. It's harder to be flexible.

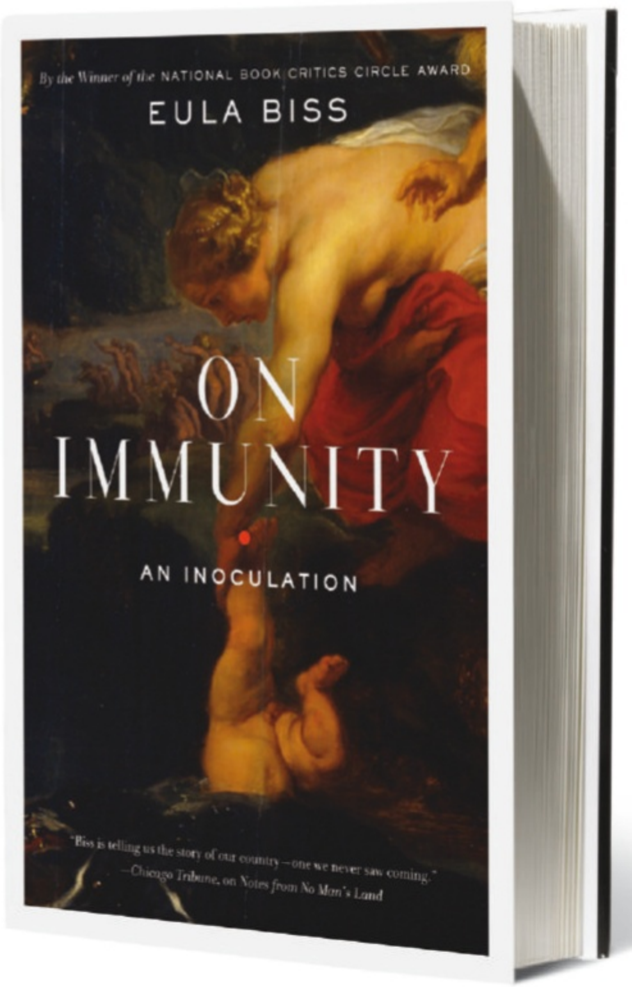
Do you still feel creatively curious?
I do have projects I've been thinking about. But it's all about the thing that's charging it, the excitement. I've been blessed enough to have had success as a youngster, so I'm not looking to sell millions of records. At this point if I put out something, it's definitely going to be a passion project. I'm not even really worried about failing. I'm just worried about being excited.

everything is temporary

André Benjamin as Hendrix in *Jimi: AllIs by My Side* (below left) and on stage with Big Boi at Sasquatch! Music Festival in May

JIMI: ALL IS BY MY SIDE: PATRICK REDMOND; OUTKAST: DAVID CONGER/SASQUATCH! 2014

Books


By the Winner of the NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE AWARD
EULA BISS
ON IMMUNITY
AN INOCULATION
"Biss is telling us the story of our country—one we never saw coming."
—Chicago Tribune, on Notes from No Man's Land

On Immunity: An Inoculation

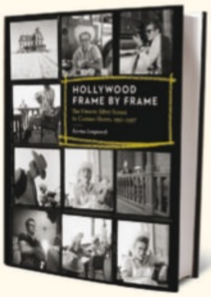
Eula Biss

NONFICTION

By Melissa Maerz

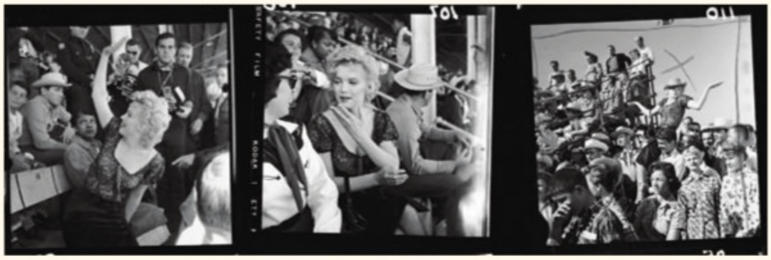
WHAT, YOU DON'T want to read nearly 200 pages about vaccination? The subject might sound dry to anyone who hasn't been fiercely debating it in her mommy group. But consider this: Eula Biss' fascinating pro-immunization book features a chapter on vampires. Although the National Book Critics Circle Award winner grounds her argument in rigorous medical, historical, and personal research—she became a mother herself just as swine-flu hysteria was sweeping the country—it's the creative thinking that makes *On Immunity* so compelling. Biss can turn practically anything into a metaphor for immunity: Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, the Occupy Wall Street movement, immigration policy, Greek mythology. And her theories about why anti-vaccine crusaders remain more afraid of inoculation than of disease itself are just as surprising as they are convincing.

Here's the biggest twist: *On Immunity* is not actually about vaccination. Sure, Biss ably traces the history of vaccines back to the 18th century, when doctors were injecting cow pus into humans, and she thoughtfully analyzes how class, gender, race, and nationality have played a role in shaping opinions on the matter since then. She also lays waste to common fears about vaccines, like the idea that they cause autism or can give a child mercury poisoning. (Apparently, a child will get more mercury exposure from her environment than from a shot, and breast milk isn't any less tainted. "Laboratory analysis of breast milk has detected paint thinners, dry-cleaning fluids, flame retardants, pesticides, and rocket fuel," Biss reveals.) But this is a deeply philosophical book, one that's less concerned with pure science than with the elemental fear that we can never protect our children from the world. In fact, Biss believes, no one can ever truly be inoculated from other people—nor should anyone be. By exploring the anxieties about what's lurking inside our flu shots, the air, and ourselves, she drives home the message that we are all responsible for one another. *On Immunity* will make you consider that idea on a fairly profound level. So now do you want to read a book about vaccination? Well, if anyone can convince you that it's your moral obligation to do so, it's Biss. **A**

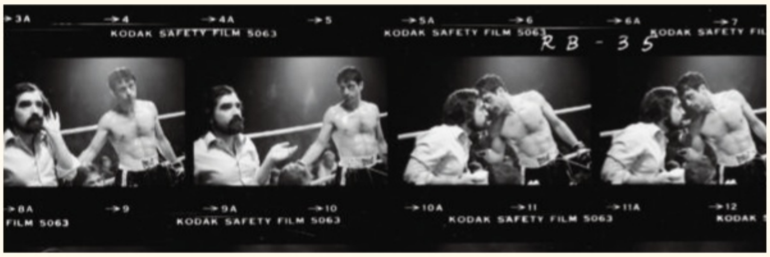


EXTREME ACCESS

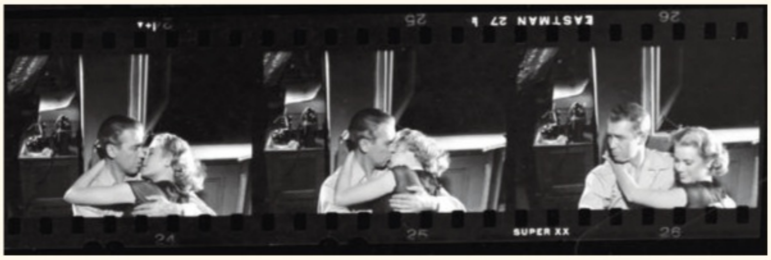
Karina Longworth's new photo book, *Hollywood Frame by Frame: The Unseen Silver Screen in Contact Sheets 1951–1997*, brims with fascinating behind-the-scenes shots from some of the most famous movie sets in the world. —**TINA JORDAN**



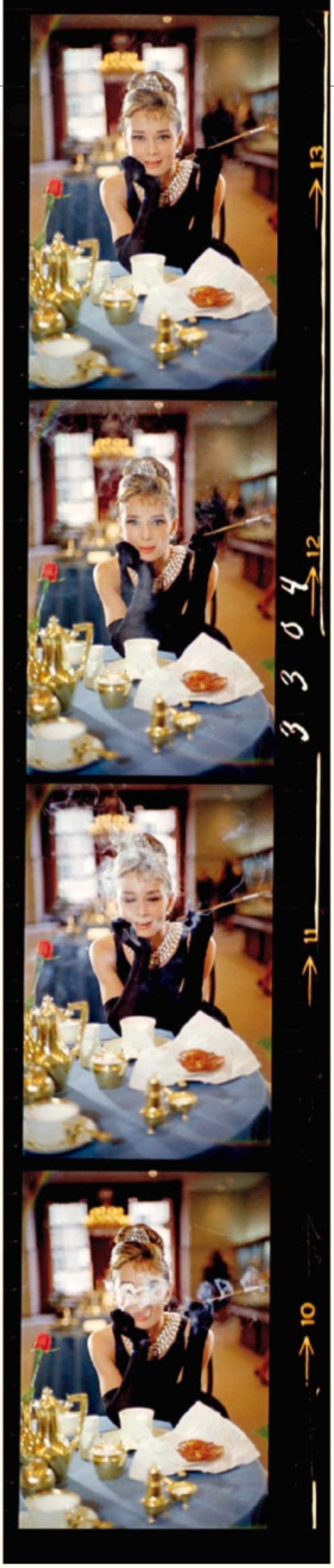
BUS STOP **(1956)**
"*Bus Stop* was the film in which, as *The New York Times* critic Bosley Crowther put it, [Marilyn] Monroe 'finally proved herself an actress,'" Longworth writes.



RAGING BULL **(1980)**
"Traditional notions of...star and director were complicated in the making of [Martin] Scorsese's landmark biopic of Jake LaMotta," as these shots of Scorsese and Robert De Niro reveal.



REAR WINDOW **(1954)**
"This contact sheet shows an apparent effort to capture the film's blend of sensuality and suspense via a perfect kiss" between James Stewart and Grace Kelly.



BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S **(1961)**
"Playing Holly Golightly cemented [Audrey Hepburn's] status as a fashion icon."

BUS STOP: ARCHIVE PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES; *RAGING BULL*: CHRISTINE LOSS; *REAR WINDOW*: MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES; *BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S*: PARAMOUNT/THE KOBAL COLLECTION/HOWELL CONANT

STATION
ELEVEN
A NOVEL
EMILY ST. JOHN MANDEL

Emily St. John Mandel

"I Feel as if I Won The Lottery"

A month ago, you probably didn't know who Emily St. John Mandel was. But odds are you're now hearing buzz about her just-published novel, *Station Eleven*, poised to become the must-read of the fall. —**STEPHAN LEE**

If you aren't someone whose Big Name alone guarantees you a place on the *New York Times* best-seller list, the odds of making it as a writer are tiny. But a few times a year, the stars align for an out-of-nowhere novel by a little-known author to become a breakout hit—and this fall it's *Station Eleven*, by Emily St. John Mandel.

Four months before its release, *Station Eleven*—a literary postapocalyptic page-turner that combines a deadly pandemic, a Hollywood A-lister's life story, and a traveling caravan of Shakespearean actors—was the unlikely toast of BookExpo America, an annual trade show bringing together publishers, media, and booksellers around the world. Since then, *Station Eleven* has garnered every bit of hype a novel can get: critical acclaim, early reader enthusiasm, and prime boosts from Amazon and Barnes & Noble. And on Sept. 18, nine days after it was published, it was even longlisted for the National Book Award.

Back in 2006, Mandel found it almost impossible to get the publishing world to pay attention to her first novel, *Last Night in Montreal*. Her then agent, Emilie Jacobson, started the slow process of sending the manuscript to publishers one at a time—an old-school method—until it finally sold two years later to Unbridled Books, a small, traditional outfit with fewer than a dozen employees. Mandel released two more books with Unbridled, all of which could be described as literary detective noir, and she became a best-kept secret in indie bookstores. "I think there's a wider problem with discoverability of books in this country," says Mandel. "It seems incredibly difficult for books published with small presses to get any attention at all. With Unbridled, we couldn't transform positive reviews into sales."

Still, praise about Mandel eventually reached Knopf editor Jenny Jackson in New York City. She'd heard raves about Mandel's Unbridled books from a Random House sales rep in the Midwest before a manuscript of *Station Eleven* landed on her desk in 2013. "It felt like complete fate," says Jackson. "Unfortunately, I wasn't the only person who'd been hearing about Emily."

In stark contrast to her experience in 2006, Mandel's new agent, Katherine Fausset, submitted *Station Eleven* to all the major publishers at once, and after a heated weeklong auction, the rights went to Knopf, the division of Random House that publishes a roster of prestigious and popular authors, including Toni Morrison and Haruki Murakami. To Jackson, what made so many publishers reject *Last Night in Montreal*—that it didn't fit neatly into one genre—is what gives *Station Eleven* endless word-of-mouth potential. You can compare it to anything from Tom Perrotta's *The Leftovers* to Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* to Jennifer Egan's *A Visit From the Goon Squad*. "Anybody who loves fiction will find something to love, and that's what sets it apart and makes it a breakout," Jackson says. And in fact, when advance copies went out to the media and retailers, the response was immediate. "The buyers brought *Station Eleven* to the attention of our Discover Great New Writers program, and we also tagged it as our 'Sleeper Hit of the Year,'" says Mary Amicucci, a VP at Barnes & Noble. "The overriding passion from those who've read it is such that you want to put it in the hands of every customer."

"I feel as if I won the lottery," says Mandel, who works as an administrative assistant at Rockefeller University. "My instinct is to hold on to [the day job]. We'll see if that remains possible in a few months."

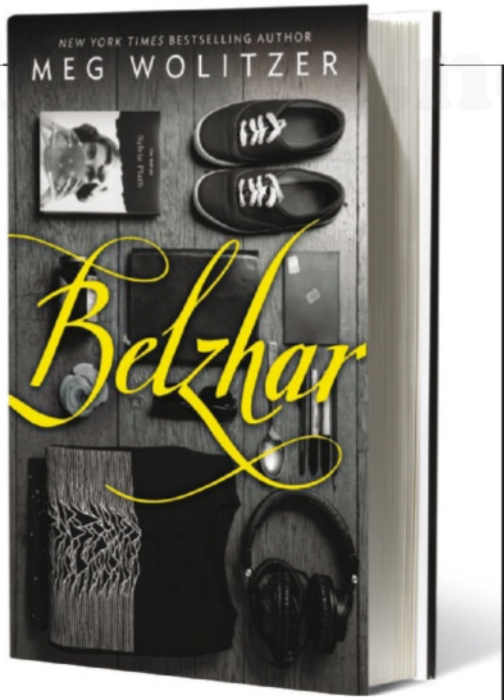
MANDEL: DESE'RAE L. STAGE

Belzhar

Meg Wolitzer

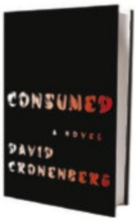
YOUNG ADULT

By Stephan Lee



If Meg Wolitzer were trying to dip into the YA world for an easy cash grab, she wouldn't have chosen such a nerdy literary topic. The author of the acclaimed 2013 epic *The Interestings* sets her teen novel at the Wooden Barn, a therapeutic boarding school in rustic Vermont meant for "emotionally fragile, highly intelligent" high schoolers. When Jam Gallahue moves into her dorm, she's still reeling from the death of her first love, Reeve. So she doesn't much care that she's been handpicked to enroll in an exclusive, mysterious lit seminar called Special Topics in English, which focuses on the works of poet-novelist Sylvia Plath. As Jam and her four classmates—who have also endured tragedies—delve into a semester-long journaling assignment, they're transported to a hallucinatory alternate reality (dubbed "Belzhar," a nod to Plath's classic *The Bell Jar*) in which their pre-trauma lives are restored. The allure of that false reality is overpowering, but the lesson lies in the courage to leave it behind. Wolitzer melds the power of confessional writing, Plath's legacy, and the internal worlds of teenagers in this unusual gem of a novel. **A–**

QUICK TAKES

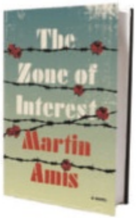


Consumed

David Cronenberg

NOVEL

"Long live the new flesh," cries a transformed James Woods in Cronenberg's 1983 classic *Videodrome*. Indeed, the pet obsessions the director explored in that film have lived on for decades in his subsequent work, including his debut novel. They're all here: body horror, fetishism, techno-organic overlap, suppuration anxiety. Nathan and Naomi are a pair of freelance journalists who discover the stories they're working on independently—a doctor's daughter exhibiting strange symptoms and a French philosopher accused of killing and devouring his wife—might be related. Cronenberg has never striven for subtlety, and he writes with the understatement of a jackhammer. But like so much in his oeuvre, *Consumed* starts to grow on you after a while. **B** —*Keith Staskiewicz*

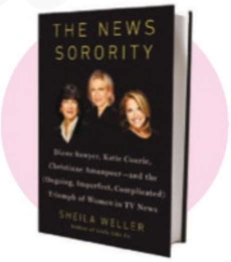


The Zone of Interest

Martin Amis

NOVEL

This latest work from the U.K. author is a lusty and often comic novel set among the German overseers of an Auschwitz-like concentration camp (or, as it is referred to here, "Kat Zet"). Offended by that concept? You have every right to be. To borrow a line of dialogue from one character as he looks at the flames emerging from the funnels of crematories, "An unsympathetic observer might find all this rather reprehensible." But *The Zone of Interest* is no mere act of autumnal provocation from the onetime enfant terrible of British literature. It is an ultimately serious and diligently researched work with a streak of deadpan humor that reframes, and reemphasizes, the horror at hand. **B+** —*Clark Collis*



SORORITY GIRLS

Sheila Weller's tell-all is packed with juicy anecdotes about TV journalists Katie Couric, Diane Sawyer, and Christiane Amanpour. Can you guess which of the three (allegedly!) did these dirty deeds?

—ADAM MARKOVITZ

Was it:

A. Katie Couric, **B.** Diane Sawyer, or **C.** Christiane Amanpour?

1. ___Once faked getting fired—complete with tears and sniffles—in order to get transferred to a better job.

2. ___Lied to her high school classmates by saying she was born a princess.

3. ___Once told *Esquire* magazine, "I've got a great ass."

4. ___Is so messy that her husband once found one of her cereal bowls filled with cat hair under his pillow.

5. ___Has a reputation for turning on her producers as soon as she grows tired of them, plus a knack for getting them fired without leaving any "fingerprints."

6. ___Kept a pregnancy secret so she wouldn't get taken off an assignment during the Gulf War.

ANSWER KEY 1. A, 2. C, 3. B, 4. A, 5. B, 6. A

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The Bullseye

Key and Peele take aim at the week's pop culture hits and misses

LEGEND
KEY ☑
PEELE ☑

Sadly, the most riveting drama I've seen since I binged the first three seasons of *Breaking Bad*.

If this one turns into a bona fide diva, do we have to call her Ariana Venti?

Meet André 1966.

Colin Farrell confirmed for *True Detective* season 2. Kind of wish it were Will Ferrell.

And Voilà! Shonda does it again. Wait, did I spell that right?

Darrell Hammond replaces Don Pardo on *SNL*. Can't wait to finally find out what his real voice sounds like!

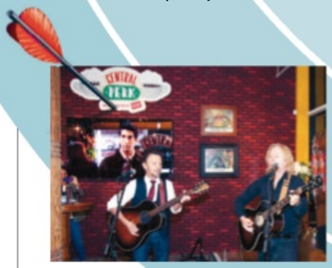
"Booty" video drops. Wives everywhere confused by cleared search histories.

Still *Guardians* of the box office.

TNT announces untitled cocaine project from Michael Bay. Sounds pretty chill.

Finally, some color commentary.

"I do"...want to watch this.

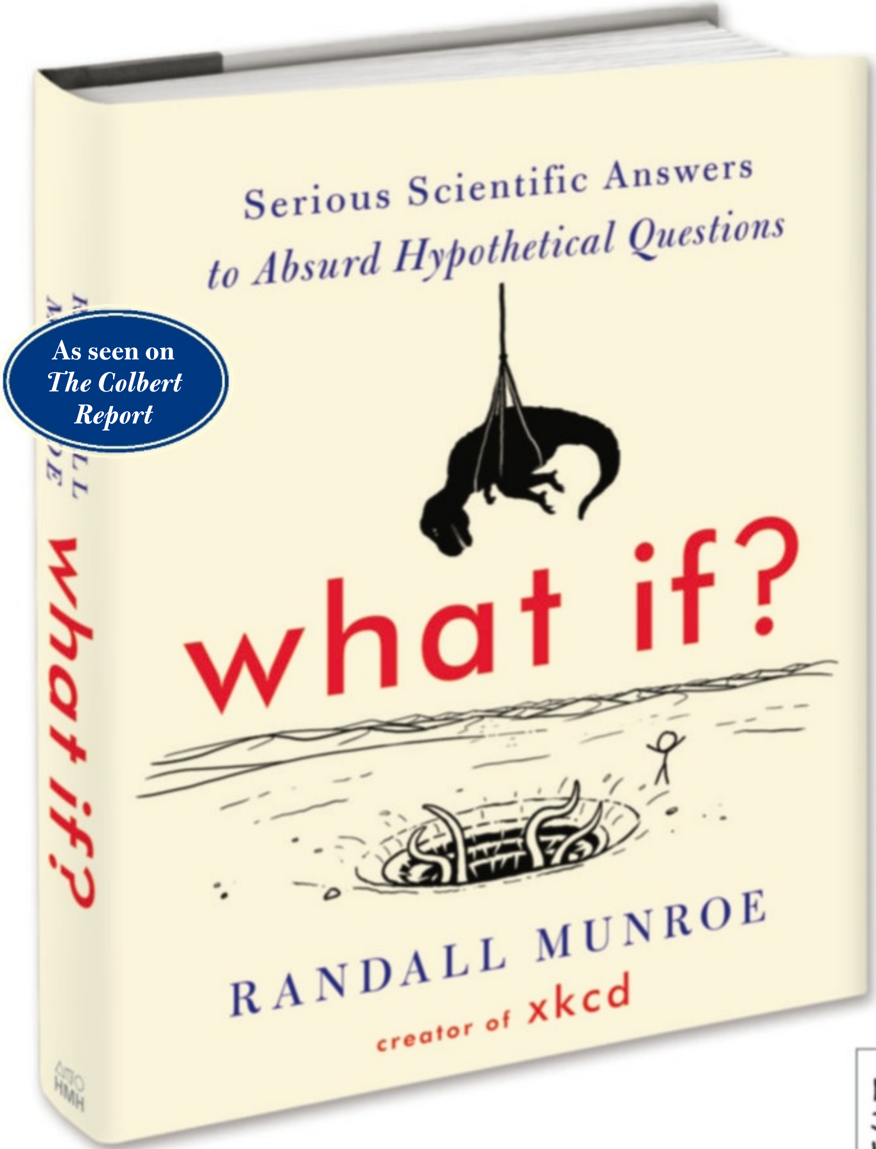


The Rembrandts reunite for *Friends* theme song in Central Perk...where they now live. It has not been their day, their week, their month, or even their year.

Cheech and Chong reunite for the *Dancing With the Stars* premiere. By "reunite" they mean "are introduced to each other."

KEY AND PEELE: PHOTOGRAPH BY ART STREIBER; FARRELL: TIM P. WHITBY/GETTY IMAGES; FERRELL: ROB KIM/GETTY IMAGES; HAMMOND: G. GERSHOFF/WIREIMAGE.COM; *GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY*: © MARVEL 2014; *DANCING WITH THE STARS*: ADAM TAYLOR/ABC; *MARRY ME*: GREG GAYNES/NBC; MICHAEL CHE: PETER KRAMER/NBC; THE REMBRANDTS: PAUL ZIMMERMAN/GETTY IMAGES; BAY: LUCA TEUCHMANN/WIREIMAGE.COM; VIOLA DAVIS: CRAIG SJODIN/ABC; ARIANA GRANDE: GILBERT CARRASQUILLO/FILMMAGIC.COM; *JIMI: ALL IS BY MY SIDE*: PATRICK REDMOND; KEY'S HEAD: LARRY BUSACCA/GETTY IMAGES; PEELE'S HEAD: PAUL DRINKWATER/NBC/NBCU PHOTO BANK VIA GETTY IMAGES; RAY RICE: ROB CARR/GETTY IMAGES; ROGER GOODELL: ANDREW BURTON/GETTY IMAGES

From the acclaimed creator of xkcd, the serious, hilarious, and absolutely one-of-a-kind new
#1 *New York Times* bestseller


Serious Scientific Answers
to Absurd Hypothetical Questions
what if?
RANDALL MUNROE
creator of xkcd
As seen on
The Colbert
Report
HMH

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—*Entertainment Weekly*

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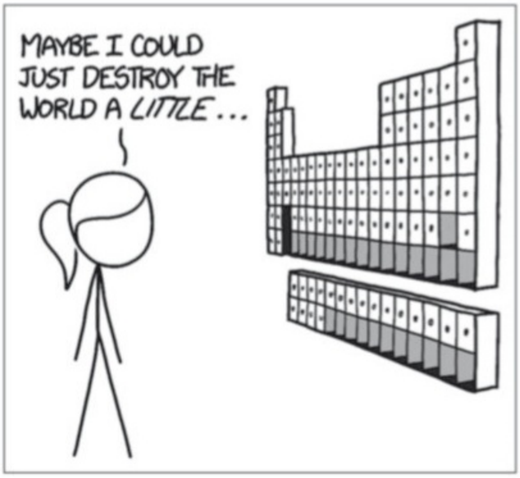
—NPR.org

"It. Is. A. Triumph."
—BoingBoing

"I laughed a lot reading this book. Even better: I learned stuff reading this book. And you will too."
—Phil Plait, Bad Astronomy blog, *Slate*

"[Randall Munroe] is one of the greatest science explainers of my generation . . . possibly the greatest . . . [*What If?*] is SO MUCH FUN."
—Hank Green

Q: What would happen if you made a periodic table out of cube-shaped bricks, where each brick was made of the corresponding element?


MAYBE I COULD JUST DESTROY THE WORLD A LITTLE...

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Pictures

RICK YANCEY
"WILDLY ENTERTAINING"
—Justin Cronin
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